

# CENTER TIMES

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CAMPUS EDITION

## UTSW ranked No. 1 Hospital in DFW for fourth consecutive year



UT Southwestern is ranked among the top 50 hospitals nationally in 10 specialties that range from brain to heart care.

From Staff Reports

For the fourth year in a row, UT Southwestern's William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital is the No. 1 Best Hospital in Dallas-Fort Worth and the No. 2 Best Hospital in Texas, according to the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. In addition, UT Southwestern is ranked among the top 50 hospitals nationally in 10 specialties ranging from brain to heart care. Six of the specialties are in the top 25.

The recognition comes as UT Southwestern prepares to significantly expand Clements University Hospital to more than 750 rooms – along with its capacity for emergency, cancer, and neurological care – near the end of 2020.

"We are gratified that the high quality of care that we provide at



UT Southwestern has been recognized once again by *U.S. News & World Report*. We are committed to providing the very best care possible to all those who come to us for help. We are able to deliver on this commitment because of the expertise and dedication of our entire health care team of physicians, nurses, and legions of others working throughout UT Southwestern in many capacities," noted Dr. Daniel

K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern.

UT Southwestern's 10 specialties, which ranked nationally among the top 50 out of 4,500 medical centers evaluated, are:

- Cardiology & Heart Surgery
- Neurology & Neurosurgery
- Nephrology
- Diabetes & Endocrinology
- Geriatrics
- Urology
- Cancer
- Pulmonology & Lung Surgery
- Gastroenterology & GI Surgery
- Orthopedics

Of those, cardiology & heart surgery, neurology & neurosurgery, nephrology, diabetes & endocrinology,

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### FOCUS: COVID-19 CRISIS



UT Southwestern and Texas Health Resources will conduct what is expected to be one of the nation's largest studies on community prevalence of COVID-19.

## UT Southwestern, Texas Health launch COVID-19 prevalence study

From Staff Reports

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has infected more than 3 million people in the U.S. and over 12 million worldwide, resulting in 550,000-plus deaths. Despite the high number of confirmed cases, the true prevalence of COVID-19 infections is believed to be underestimated due to insufficient testing capacity and a high percentage of asymptomatic people.

A major challenge to containing the spread of COVID-19 is a shortage of information about where the virus is spreading and why certain populations are affected more than others. To gain a better picture of

the unfolding pandemic in Dallas and Tarrant counties, researchers at UT Southwestern and Texas Health Resources will conduct what is expected to be one of the nation's largest studies on community prevalence of COVID-19 by testing tens of thousands of people who represent a cross-section of the North Texas population.

"The DFW COVID-19 Prevalence Study will provide vitally important insights into the distribution and spread of COVID-19 throughout our community," said Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern. "A deeper understanding of who

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Dr. John Minna, left, and his longtime research partner, the late Dr. Adi Gazdar

## The journey of a war against cancer that began decades ago

By Deborah Wormser

Research begun by two UT Southwestern faculty members earlier in their careers continues to have an enormous ripple effect, positively impacting cancer studies worldwide.

When Dr. John Minna and his longtime research partner, the late Dr. Adi Gazdar, arrived at UT Southwestern from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 1991, they brought along about 300 lung cancer cell lines. The collection has since grown to about 600 cell lines, including some from other malignancies and including those producing retroviruses.

An analysis by the NCI Center for Research Strategy of the first 278 cell lines collected by the research partners and their former NIH team published in the *Journal of Cellular Biochemistry* demonstrates the magnitude of their research effort – more than 14,000 research grant projects and 33,207 published scientific reports have used those cell lines and related products. What's more, that activity resulted in more than 1.2 million scientific citations referencing at least one cell line. Many published studies involved more than one cell line, meaning the lines

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## Recognizing dedicated, longtime service

In a special section that begins on page 3, we honor colleagues celebrating milestone years of service, including this year's new members of the Quarter Century Club.

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### DISTINCTIVE ASPIRATIONS

Quality Improvement Distinction program teaches medical students how to advance patient care.

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## IN MEMORIAM

# Dr. Beth Levine was an international leader in autophagy research

By Carol Marie Cropper

Dr. Beth Levine, a Professor of Internal Medicine and Microbiology whose pioneering research identified the role of autophagy in the development of human diseases, died June 15 at her home in Dallas. She was 60.

Dr. Levine was Director of the Center for Autophagy Research and holder of the Charles Sprague Distinguished Chair in Biomedical Science. An Investigator with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute since 2008 and elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 2013, Dr. Levine was an international leader in research on autophagy, a housekeeping process in which cells rid themselves of damaged constituents in order to maintain cellular health.

She was recruited to UT Southwestern in 2004 from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (now the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons) to become Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases and the Jay P. Sanford Professor in Infectious Diseases.

Dr. Levine was best known for discovering

the first mammalian autophagy gene, which she named *beclin 1*, and demonstrating that autophagy played a critical role in the determination of human health.

Over a span of two decades, her findings repeatedly deciphered the mysteries of the molecular pathways that were essential to cellular health and survival. Her laboratory identified conserved mechanisms underlying the regulation of autophagy and provided the first evidence that autophagy genes are important in antiviral host defense, tumor suppression, neurodegenerative diseases, lifespan extension, metazoan development, diabetes, and the beneficial metabolic effects of exercise. In addition, she developed a potent autophagy-inducing cell permeable peptide, Tat-beclin 1, which has been shown to have numerous potential therapeutic applications in a range of human diseases.

She was the Distinguished Lecturer from the Harvey Society in 2003 and received the Stanley J. Korsmeyer Award from the American Society for Clinical Investigation in 2014, the Phyllis T. Bodel Award from Yale University in 2018, and the Barcroft Medal from Queen's University in



Dr. Beth Levine

Belfast in 2018.

"Her work opened up an entirely new field," said research collaborator Dr. Michael Shiloh, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Microbiology. "Her 1999 research paper in *Nature* identified *beclin 1* as the first known mammalian autophagy gene, described its action as a tumor suppressor linked to human breast cancer, and inspired a generation of autophagy researchers." In 2003, she organized and chaired the first conference on autophagy, held at Colby College in Waterville, Maine.

Like her scientific contributions, Dr. Levine's desire to elevate those with whom she worked made far-reaching and lasting impressions. She

was greatly respected as a scientist and mentor to others, said Dr. Shiloh. "She was esteemed and valued as a physician-scientist who trained many graduate students and post docs who have gone on to successful careers of their own. Indeed, one of her most remarkable traits was her ability to both challenge and support all those around her to reach their maximum potential."

Cindy Jozefiak, a Senior Division Operations Administrator who began working with Dr. Levine in 2006, said she will be remembered as a brilliant, innovative, and inspiring woman and scientist who demanded the best from herself and the researchers she mentored. "She was very passionate not only about her science but also about her people," she said.

Dr. Levine was beloved by her researchers and staff and treated them like family, celebrating birthdays at the office and throwing karaoke Christmas parties at her home, said Ms. Jozefiak.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, on April 7, 1960, Dr. Levine graduated magna cum laude from Brown University in 1981. She received her medical degree from Cornell University Medical College in 1986, followed by a residency in internal medicine at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.

She was a postdoctoral fellow in infectious diseases and virology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine from 1989 through 1992 and worked as an Assistant Professor and then as an Associate Professor at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons until 2004.

Dr. Levine is survived by her husband, Dr. Milton Packer, a cardiologist and former Professor and Chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences at UT Southwestern, and two children.

Dr. Shiloh holds the Professorship in Infectious Diseases, in honor of James P. Luby, M.D.



Shirley Zwinggi

## Longtime Employee Recognition Program Committee Chair retires this month

By Debbie Bolles

Shirley Zwinggi, Chair of the Employee Recognition Program Committee, is stepping down from leading the committee as she retires this month following 39 years of service as a UT Southwestern employee.

Ms. Zwinggi, an Administrative Manager in the Department of Surgery, started working at UTSW in 1980 as an Employment Interviewer in Personnel. She advanced to management roles in Employment, Benefits, and Employee Relations and then transferred to Surgery in 1992 as Assistant to the Department Chair, later leading to her current role.

In 2004, she was appointed Chair of the Employee Recognition Committee.

"It is the absolute best committee on campus. To have the opportunity to thank our wonderful staff and to celebrate their years of service is a privilege. It is so fun to celebrate with employees who love working at UT Southwestern as much as I do," she said.

Her best memory is of the year the committee recognized its first 50-year honoree, James Campbell, who had started working for the former St. Paul University Hospital in 1961. That was in 2012.

Heading the committee that plans the annual Quarter Century Club event

— usually a congratulatory luncheon — has not been without challenges at times. She recalled one year in particular.

"The most unsettling moment was when the power went off in the ND Building about 45 minutes before the luncheon was scheduled to begin. The elevators, lights, and AC were not working," she said. "Some of the attendees actually climbed 14 stories while the majority of the guests were waiting on the ground level. We also were concerned the kitchen did not have power. The power did get restored about 15 minutes before we were scheduled to start. We were a little late in starting but we all laughed at the situation and will never forget it."

Janelle Browne, VP of Human Resources, thanked Ms. Zwinggi for her dedication to the committee, ever-infectious smile, and positive attitude, which have made this program so successful and facilitated UTSW employee engagement.

"We are extremely grateful for Shirley's contributions to this committee over the years. Her dedication to employee recognition and helping to make celebration of longtime service a special event for our employees is extraordinary. She will be missed," Ms. Browne said.

## Rankings Continued from page 1

geriatrics, and urology are among the top 25.

Additionally, UT Southwestern is rated as "high-performing" in seven specialty procedures — abdominal aortic aneurysm repair, aortic valve surgery, COPD, colon cancer surgery, heart bypass surgery, heart failure, and lung cancer surgery — bringing to 17 the number of nationally recognized specialties or procedures in a single hospital.

In other institutional measures, UT Southwestern ranked No. 1 among global health care institutions in the 2020 Nature Index for its published research, UT Southwestern Medical School ranked nationally among "Best Graduate Schools," and UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and UT Southwestern School of Health Professions have nationally ranked programs.

On the clinical side, UT Southwestern's Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in North Texas and one of 51 in the nation, placing it among the top 4 percent of approximately 1,500 cancer centers in the United States. UT Southwestern is designated as an Advanced Comprehensive Stroke Center by the Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, and has one of the nation's leading epilepsy clinics — a Level 4 center, the highest possible level by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers — part of the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute.

Clements University Hospital also has received recognition for its high patient-satisfaction scores, its quality and safety efforts, and its innovative design. For example, the hospital is able to quickly convert patient and ICU wards — via specially filtered ventilation systems — to help manage infectious diseases such as COVID-19, while safely continuing its routine specialty care in other areas such as cardiovascular, GI, orthopedic, and urological care.

"The pioneering, data-driven care our dedicated physicians, nurses, and staff are able to provide throughout our health system is reflected in high levels of patient satisfaction and, most importantly, in the outcomes we are able to achieve," said Dr. John Warner, Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs. "The 12-story, third tower expansion of Clements University Hospital, along with recent expansions of its Radiation Oncology facilities and outpatient clinical space, means our health system is ideally positioned to continue to meet Texas' burgeoning health care needs through this current crisis and beyond."

The expansion also prepares UT Southwestern for referrals from continued growth of the Southwestern Health Resources network, a partnership with Texas Health Resources to better integrate delivery of care across North Texas. The network encompasses three of the five top-ranked hospitals in Dallas-Fort Worth. In addition to UT Southwestern's No. 1-ranked hospital, the Southwestern Health Resources network includes Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Southwest, ranked No. 4 in DFW; Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas, ranked No. 5 in DFW; and Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Fort Worth, ranked No. 6 in DFW.

"While the members of the UT Southwestern team are gratified by the recognition of *U.S. News* and others, they come to work each day motivated not by rankings but the desire to provide the best outcomes and experience for our patients and their families. At the same time, UT Southwestern remains committed to medical discovery through research that will enable improved treatment and ultimately cures and prevention for people everywhere," Dr. Podolsky said.

Dr. Podolsky holds the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.

Dr. Warner holds the Jim and Norma Smith Distinguished Chair for Interventional Cardiology, and the Nancy and Jeremy Halbreich, Susan and Theodore Strauss Professorship in Cardiology.

### CENTERTIMES

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# CENTER TIMES

## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION 2020

Long-term employees play an invaluable role in the life of UT Southwestern Medical Center. Their faithful, dedicated service has helped the institution become what it is today. In this special section of *Center Times*, we showcase some of these employees and their varied interests.



### Helen Foreman

Lead Bed Control Coordinator  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital



## Decades of history rooted in patient care

By Courtney Borchert

If Helen Foreman's career were a tree, then its cross section would show 45 years of growth and layers of meaningful UT Southwestern connections and memories within its tree rings.

Since she started working as an admitting clerk at the former St. Paul University Hospital more than four decades ago, Ms. Foreman has been taking special care of patients. She is now the Lead Bed Control Coordinator at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, responsible for assigning rooms and keeping track of every patient who

checks in and out of the hospital system.

"In this position, you are controlling everything that is going on in the hospital and trying to make sure everything is done correctly," Ms. Foreman says. The ultimate objective of her role: to see the forest for the trees and optimize patient care. She helps with the flow of the clinic by effectively communicating and coordinating among wards, departments, clinical teams, and services outside of the hospital.

With a warm and friendly demeanor, she is proud of the relationships she has built with her colleagues, staff members in various clinicians'

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Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern Medical Center, invites the campus community to a virtual celebration to honor employees with 45, 40, 35, and 30 years of service and to welcome new members of the Quarter Century Club. Because of COVID-19, the traditional Quarter Century Club luncheon will be replaced this year with a special program recognizing honorees that will be available for viewing starting at noon on Wednesday, Aug. 12, on *Center Times Plus*.

## Longtime employees honored for their role in UT Southwestern's enduring legacy of excellence, growth, and success

By Steve Kaskovich

Dozens of longtime employees who are celebrating career milestones at UT Southwestern will be honored during Employee Recognition Week for dedicated work that has contributed to the institution's growth and success.

In all, 97 employees are invited honorees to an Aug. 12 virtual celebration where they will be recognized for achieving 45, 40, 35, 30, or 25 years of service. This includes 46 new members of the Quarter Century Club, meaning these employees achieved the 25-year mark for UT System service. Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern, is hosting the event and Angelica Marin Hill, Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy, is the

keynote speaker.

A native of Dallas, Ms. Hill said she grew up hearing about UT Southwestern but did not fully appreciate its stature as a global research powerhouse until she returned to the city to join the institution after working in Austin.

"Coming to UT Southwestern and seeing the commitment and variety and breadth of roles – from education to clinical care, research to administration and daily operations – the complexity of it all is so impressive and so astounding," she said.

Ms. Hill joined UT Southwestern in 2004, serving initially as Director of Government Relations and then as Assistant



Angelica Marin Hill

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## Frances Eubanks

Senior Research Nurse  
Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine Division, Pediatrics

# A heart for advancing research that helps the tiniest patients

By Ashley Green-Jones

**F**rances Eubanks has a lot to celebrate these days: having worked at UT Southwestern for 40 years and her recent retirement.

"I think it is rare for someone to stay in one job for very many years," Mrs. Eubanks says. "But I love research and the feeling that what I'm involved in can change what is done at the bedside to improve the care of the most vulnerable baby."

Mrs. Eubanks started at UTSW in 1979 as a Research Nurse in the Department of Pediatrics. Since then, she's ventured into other areas within the Department, such as being a Bedside Nurse. Ultimately, she came back to research.

"My belief is I was led by God into nursing," Mrs. Eubanks says. "I always gravitated to Pediatrics while in nursing school and landed in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) after college."

She has very fond memories of the NICU team stemming from her days working at the former St. Paul University Hospital, since replaced by William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

"Although many of us don't work in the Clements NICU any longer, we still get together and feel like family," Mrs. Eubanks says. "Some of us have worked together for over 25 years."

Over four decades, Mrs. Eubanks benefited from several mentors and supporters on campus. She names Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics Dr. George McCracken, Vice Provost and Senior Associate Dean for Education Dr. Charles Ginsburg, and former faculty member Dr. Jon Tyson as a few, along with Nursing

Manager Aziza Young.

"Dr. Tyson, who is now at UTHealth, was literally like a big brother to me for many years," Mrs. Eubanks says. "And Aziza Young, Manager of the Clements NICU, was a fabulous manager during most of my 29 years in the NICU."

As she fondly reminisces about the past, Mrs. Eubanks says she felt very much valued by her former team, all of whom miss her.

"Frances has been a delight to work with over the past five years. Her positive attitude and can-do spirit are much appreciated by her research teammates, the bedside nurses in the NICU, and the families of the patients who participate in our studies," says Dr. Myra Wyckoff, Professor of Pediatrics and Mrs. Eubanks' former supervisor. "We wish she could be with us another 40 years!"

Last serving as a Senior Research Nurse for Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, Mrs. Eubanks describes herself as friendly and cooperative. Others might call her superwoman.

"I home-schooled all four of my kids from kindergarten through high school and taught high school geography for 11 years in a large home-school co-op," Mrs. Eubanks says. "I know my geography. I can locate and spell most of the countries in the world."

Now enjoying retired life, Mrs. Eubanks likes to hike, cycle, and sing. She is enjoying spending retirement with her husband of 37 years, Gary, who is a beekeeper, along with her two grandchildren.

"We're ready to travel, grandparent, and maybe have a honey business," she says.

# She considers UT Southwestern more than just a workplace – it's family

By Nyshicka Jordan

**I**n 1992, when Administrative Manager Madeline Kirven-Gamble married Don Gamble – her soulmate – many of her beloved UT Southwestern colleagues were there to watch her say "I do." "That's my best UT Southwestern memory," she says.

The Gambles' Texas-style wedding in Mexia included a barbecue cookout and horseback riding on her parents' ranch.

"One of my co-workers brought their three little boys with them. I am so amazed because one of those boys (Greg Wayne) grew up and has been an Information Resources employee for almost 15 years now and remembers that trip to the country," says Mrs. Kirven-Gamble, who also works in IR.

Memories like this make UT Southwestern feel like a family that she's worked with for the last 40 years. In fact, one of her two children became a UTSW colleague. Her daughter, Destiny Gamble, has worked as a Clinical Staff Assistant at the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute for one year.

"Destiny has always had a passion for helping others. She has witnessed the years of stability and enjoyment I've had at UT Southwestern. It gave me great pride to know that after achieving her degree in biology, she chose to share that passion and expand her knowledge and career growth with UT Southwestern," Mrs. Kirven-Gamble says.

Even before her daughter joined UTSW, Mrs. Kirven-Gamble has always described her work environment as family oriented. This adds to her job satisfaction, she says.

One of the contributions she is most proud of relates to her

role in the 2014 opening of William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. IR was heavily involved in ordering all the infrastructure and technology equipment for the hospital. She even had the opportunity to be more hands-on by participating in a hospital "day in the life" drill in which she portrayed a mock patient in various areas of the hospital.

"Being a part of the opening of Clements University Hospital makes me very proud. Knowing that my work makes a difference energizes me, and it's very rewarding to see positive results," she says.

When Mrs. Kirven-Gamble began working at UTSW in 1979, she started as a Senior Clerk in Medical Computing Resources, which later was renamed Academic Computing. Information Resources was a spinoff of Academic Computing. Over the years, she has experienced challenges and opportunities that have allowed her to grow professionally and personally.

"It's very satisfying to work at an institution that attributes its success to the many contributions made by its employees," she says.

Outside of work, Mrs. Kirven-Gamble enjoys family time and traveling. Her many hobbies include reading, playing basketball, and fishing. And as a fisherwoman, she's proved to be no slouch.

"A few years ago, my family and I went to Lake Tawakoni to fish. About an hour before it was time to leave, I caught a 32-pound blue catfish. It was a real struggle to reel him in, but I did it. About 15 minutes later, my husband caught a 42- and a 52-pounder. It was the best day ever," she says.



## Madeline Kirven-Gamble

Administrative Manager  
Information Resources

## Facts and figures

**1996** The year the program was established to honor employees with 25 or more years of UT System service.

**371** Total number of members in the Quarter Century Club – almost 3 percent of UTSW's 14,459 nonfaculty employees.

**54** Number of years of service of the current employee – Barbara McKenney – with the longest tenure. She is a Senior Administrative Assistant in General and Acute Care Surgery.

**35** Number of Quarter Century Club members in the department with the most such members, which is Information Resources.



## Foreman Continued from page 3

offices, and other departments in the hospital.

"I love working with my co-workers," she says. "Anytime the people on the floor have a problem, they call me. I'm always willing to lend a helping hand."

Because she displays immense expertise in her field, others are quick to follow her advice and leadership. Ms. Foreman readily takes on the role of a mentor to those who are new to the team, showing them the ropes.

"I'm a problem solver, and I'm glad that I'm able to help them out," she says. "I know I would want to be able to pick up the phone and call someone if I were in a situation where I needed help."

She says the fact that she "loves helping people" is

one key to her long-standing success.

Ms. Foreman says the strong interpersonal bonds she has developed throughout her life give her grounding. Outside of the hospital, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her sisters, brothers, and other family members, including her son, Ken; granddaughters, Briana and Kiana; goddaughter, Gabrielle; her special great-nephews, Kor'Dae, Kharami, Marquin, Ayden, and Dallas; her beautiful niece, Daisy; and her very special friend, Leonard.

"Leonard and I love spending time together and travel to different places every year, like Florida and San Diego," she says.

Ms. Foreman also enjoys attending Mt. Zion Church of God in Christ, where she serves as Public Relations Coordinator and as a Pastor's Assistant, helping out in the Special Event and Banquet and Anniversary Departments, plus anywhere else she can be of assistance.





## Job dedication is more than just food for thought

By Ashley Green-Jones

Since 1979, UT Southwestern's dining halls have had one staple through all of their transformations: the dedication of Andrea Litton.

Ms. Litton, a Food Service Worker, is celebrating 40 years on the job at UTSW. Earlier this year, she moved over to William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital to join the Food Services team there.

"I am going to miss everyone at the South Campus food court," Ms. Litton says. "I love my boss, the other workers, and all the people who dine there."

On South Campus, she moved quietly from table to table cleaning, moving trays, and changing trash bags when bins were full. Even after 40 years, she knows there is still room for improvement.

"I'm continuously working on my attitude," Ms. Litton says. "I think I can be nicer to my boss."

Her boss of the past two years, however, has nothing but kind words for her.

"She is always concerned about whether she is doing her job correctly, and I always let her know she is," says Rick Stewart, Manager of Auxiliary Services Operations. "One of her cutest quotes is, 'I did a fantastic job today,' and I always

let her know I notice that she did, in fact, do a fantastic job. She is always on time and knows when and where she should be on her daily schedule."

A gold medal winner off campus – she once took home first place in a Special Olympics Bowling Tournament – Ms. Litton reveals that bowling is her enduring hobby. She also likes to dance, play guitar, swim, and go on picnics. Not surprisingly, she can sing, too.

"My favorite thing to sing is Christmas songs," Ms. Litton says. "I know a bunch of Christmas music."

When the food court closes, her tasks shift to vacuuming the floors and helping with storing pots, pans, dishes, and paper products.

By constantly circulating around the food court during her shift, she's also become a one-woman lost-and-found department. "I'm always finding wallets, purses, umbrellas, and things that people left behind," Ms. Litton says. "I like it when I can locate the owner of something lost."

Those times make the job even more pleasurable, she says.

"I'm really happy to have worked at UT Southwestern all these years," Ms. Litton says, praising her "wonderful" fellow employees. "I hope to be remembered as someone who works hard and is never late."



**Andrea Litton**

Food Service Worker  
Food Services

## Finding a slice of happiness at UT Southwestern

By Courtney Borchert

When asked about the future, 77-year-old Honorable Williams eagerly voices his excitement for the expansion taking place at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. The larger Emergency Department will have 63 exam rooms and grow patient capacity by 40 percent once renovations are completed.

"I am looking forward to the future for that new wing they are building, and how exciting it is going to be for the hospital to meet the growing needs of patients at the facility," he says.

Mr. Williams is a Building Maintenance Specialist who spends much of his time around Clements University Hospital. His primary responsibilities include working on the nurse call systems found in each hospital room, the tube system, and the linen chutes. He also provides other preventive maintenance and repair for equipment like hospital beds.

Oftentimes, creativity is at the forefront of hands-on work. Mr. Williams says he has plenty of moments when he needs to take an unconventional approach or adapt in order to temporarily solve a problem until the right part or tool

is obtained by the Hospital Facilities Maintenance Division.

Although he has established a four-decade career with UT Southwestern, he does not consider what he does a job. Mr. Williams has developed a connection to the institution that goes beyond just clocking in and out each day.

"Choose a job you love, and you'll never have to work a day in your life," he says. "I find a way to have a joyous day even on difficult days."

Mr. Williams gave comments similar to those he made five years ago about retirement, saying he would probably retire soon. But the problem is he keeps putting it off – because he loves his job so much. He attributes part of his passion for his position to those who surround him.

"We have a lot of fun and there is never a dull moment in our department," he says. "The staff energizes me."

Mr. Williams' colleagues ensured he had a lively birthday celebration in February that was complete with cake, gifts, and a pushup challenge to show off his strength.

Overall, he is skilled in a wide range of repairs and is very easygoing. He finds projects for himself at home as a form of relaxation. After work, his evenings are usually spent doing two things: reading Scripture and restoring classic vehicles to their former glory. His current project is a 1966 Chevrolet Nova.



**Honorable Williams**

Building Maintenance Specialist  
Hospital Facilities Maintenance Division

## Speaker Continued from page 3

Vice President for Legislative Budget and Policy. After serving as interim Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy, she was named to her current position in 2014. She holds an undergraduate degree in history from Harvard College and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Texas McCombs School of Business. Prior to joining UT Southwestern, she worked as a Senior Analyst with the Texas Senate Committee on Finance.

In her current role, Ms. Hill represents UT Southwestern with congressional and state legislators, educating them about issues of importance to the institution and working to secure their support. Her office also works

with federal agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for policies and regulations that are conducive to the mission at UT Southwestern.

"I truly enjoy engaging with our legislators to win tangible and intangible support for UT Southwestern and advance what we do. It is meaningful to be part of an excellent institution," she said.

Last year, Ms. Hill led efforts to secure a performance-based research funding formula for UT Southwestern in the Texas Legislature that provides a more stable source of state funds to support the institution's long-term research infrastructure needs. The formula recognizes performance and provides an incentive by delivering state-matching funding for every additional external research grant received. This rewards the institution for continued growth and

lessens the threat of discretionary budget cuts when the Legislature meets every two years. UT Southwestern receives almost \$200 million in appropriated state support each year.

"Often legislative work is a long-term proposition," Ms. Hill said, noting that UT Southwestern had been working on the performance-based funding formula initiative for the past decade. "The vision and strategy for this was set by Dr. Podolsky, and we have been chipping away at it in each session. The performance research formula will help propel UT Southwestern to bigger and better heights."

Meeting with Texas legislators and members of Congress is always interesting, Ms. Hill said. Some have experience in the health care industry and are able to delve into details. Others are new to the issues affecting academic

medical centers and need to be informed.

Overall, there is a growing knowledge and recognition among elected officials of what UT Southwestern delivers for the state and the nation, she said, thanks to the work of the Government Affairs staff and many other dedicated employees.

"It is gratifying to hear legislators who are longtime supporters or even newer ones express how appreciative they are of UT Southwestern and our contributions to the community," she said.

■  
*Dr. Podolsky holds the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.*





## Jeannette Burchfield

Senior Research Nurse  
Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine Division, Pediatrics

### Managing data to make a difference in neonatal care

By Ashley Green-Jones

Jeannette Burchfield has tried to make life better for mothers and their babies since 1977. That's when she began working as a Staff Nurse at Parkland Memorial Hospital in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

"I developed a love for neonatal medicine that continues to this day," Ms. Burchfield says.

In 1984, she took the next step and joined UT Southwestern when she conducted research for a breastfeeding study with Dr. Jon Tyson, a former faculty member.

"Dr. Tyson was my mentor," Ms. Burchfield says. "He taught me the importance of conducting high quality research in an ethical manner, with great attention to detail."

Now a Senior Research Nurse in the Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, she manages the divisional database for Parkland's NICU.

"The data I collect is used to make a difference in neonatal care," Ms. Burchfield says. "That gives me a great deal of job satisfaction."

After 35 years, Ms. Burchfield still has the same response as to why she has had such a long career at one institution – "I enjoy my job. I like the autonomy, and I enjoy the people I work with."

She serves as an unofficial instructor to other nurses, teaching them to decipher and monitor the database. Her supervisor, Dr. Luc Brion, Professor of Pediatrics, regards her as a pleasure to work with and praises her attention to detail.

"Jeannette has been running the database meticulously for decades with a minimal error rate, which gives the database its validity," Dr. Brion says. "She does an excellent job at pointing out difficult decisions, such as an unclear statement in a radiologist's reading, leading to discussions with me and potential requests to radiologists for final adjudication."

Outside of work, Ms. Burchfield loves to read and enjoys spending time with her three children and three grandchildren.



## Arthur Cash

Accountant III  
Hospital Finance

### When a passion and a profession come together

By Courtney Borchert

The beginning of Arthur Cash's career can be traced back to a classroom in Waxahachie, Texas. He took the advice of one of his high school teachers and enrolled in an accounting elective; the rest is history.

Mr. Cash began working at UT Southwestern in 1984 as an Accounting Clerk II in the Office of Accounting and Fiscal Reports, later advancing to Accountant III in the James W. Aston Ambulatory Care Center. About a year ago, he transitioned into his current role, an Accountant III in Hospital Finance, responsible for purchase requisitions, monthly analysis, and account reconciliation.

After 35 years, Mr. Cash says his work anniversary milestone is a time to reflect on the peaks and valleys of his career.

"Thirty-five years means dedication, sacrifice, and an investment in my future," he says. "There were some tough departments and late nights at the office – like leaving at 3 a.m. during year-end closing – but I stuck with it."

The opportunity for advancement is one of the benefits he enjoys most about working at UT Southwestern. With his eagerness to learn and problem-solve, Mr. Cash says the sky is the limit in accounting when it comes to expanding his knowledge base and helping others tackle tasks. His co-worker, Marcia Menyweather, describes him as organized, calm, and understanding.

Former UT Southwestern employee Ramona Sheffield is among many who cherished his friendliness. She recalls how Mr. Cash was an excellent "partner in crime" when it came to strategically coordinating breaks to win Heaven 97 radio contests for tickets to plays like "Willie & Esther."

One of Mr. Cash's favorite memories on campus was a winter holiday function given by Dr. Charles Sprague, the first President of the Medical Center.

As Mr. Cash has watched the campus grow right before his eyes in tandem with his career, he says his time working here has been a wonderful experience. Off the clock, he likes to play the piano and spend time at his church. He is the fifth child in a family of seven siblings: six boys and one girl.



## Bruce Folchert

Senior Business Analyst  
Health System Information Resources

### Least favorite memory: getting pepper-sprayed

By Lori Sundeen Soderbergh

Like many UT Southwestern employees, Bruce Folchert has a vision for contributing to the community and making the world a better place. His idea is a bit unconventional though, reflecting his personality.

"I would love to develop some way of instantly teaching people in Dallas how to drive! That would make everyone happier," he says with a smile.

All joking aside, his real talent is figuring out how things work, a critical asset in his job as a Senior Business Analyst in Health System Information Resources. His work lies in supporting EPIC (UT Southwestern's electronic health record system) for inpatient care at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

A typical day involves collaborating with admissions staff to help with workflows and identifying possible improvements in admissions, discharges, and transfers.

Mr. Folchert, who started working at UTSW in 1985, has a range of experiences in his background.

"The reason I love working here is that I've had endless opportunities to learn new things," he says.

One unusual workplace memory stands out. At his first UTSW job, Mr. Folchert received pepper spray training as a police officer at the former St. Paul University Hospital. "The training basically entailed getting sprayed! Our Chief thought it would be helpful for the officers to know the effects firsthand," he says. "I did use this training just one time while on the job, and I hope that will be the only time."

When not at work, Mr. Folchert enjoys spending time with family and friends – plus doing just about anything outdoors.

While it's true that his analytical mind can solve puzzles quickly, he is still working on solving the biggest puzzle of all – Dallas traffic.





## Deborah Jackson

Registered Nurse II  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, 11 Green,  
Surgical Oncology

### Oncology nurse thrives on providing supportive care

By Nyshicka Jordan

In 1998, Deborah Jackson made the list of DFW Great 100 Nurses. Work colleagues describe her as knowledgeable, kind, and humble – making her a perfect addition to the list, a recognition she was happy and grateful to receive.

Ms. Jackson, a surgical oncology nurse at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, joined UT Southwestern's nursing staff in 1984 to work in Obstetrics and Gynecology. She says the best part of her job is taking care of patients, acknowledging that nursing responsibilities are not without their difficulties.

"I think it was meant to be for me to work in oncology," Ms. Jackson says. "Patients are going through a difficult situation and I want to help them cope and be supportive in the best way I know how and offer them a positive outlook."

Despite the challenges of her job, overall Ms. Jackson says her time at UTSW has been rewarding.

"My co-workers and my wonderful management team energize me at work because they are always encouraging," she says.

Of course, staying on top of her game in health care can be stressful. One tough moment that stands out is when she took a professional exam.

"I was so nervous to take my ACLS [Advanced Cardiac Life Support] test that I showed up to the class with one black shoe and one brown shoe," she recalls. "My nerves were just so intense, but fortunately I passed."

Besides her expertise as a nurse, she adds value to her team as a bilingual caregiver who speaks English and Spanish, a skill set of constant use on the job.

Outside of work, she enjoys cooking and brags about her mac and cheese. She also likes shopping, traveling, and spending time with her four grandchildren.



## Barbara Lohrenz

Registered Nurse II  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, Dialysis

### A circuitous journey to nursing that started in Nigeria

By Lori Sundeen Soderbergh

Thanks in part to the generosity of her older sister, Barbara Lohrenz is celebrating 35 years of nursing at UT Southwestern.

It was a long road to putting "RN" after her name – a road that stretched all the way from Nigeria, where she grew up in the city of Jos. Her parents were missionaries and generous of spirit, often spontaneously inviting a dozen or so neighbors to join them for supper.

"Nigeria has a huge population of people with English as the main language and many dialects. I learned a few words of several languages instead of just one," she recalls. She attended boarding school and remembers well that the school nurse was expected to cover just about every type of need while caring for the health of the students.

After graduating from high school, Ms. Lohrenz traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to attend nursing school. Leaving behind her Nigerian culture, friends, and family to live alone in a new city in a new country proved too much for the 17-year-old to handle. Even though they had just brought home their new baby, her sister and brother-in-law invited Ms. Lohrenz into their home in Odessa, Texas, so she could attend nursing school while still living with family. Dallas was her next step after Odessa, and living here stuck.

Ms. Lohrenz started her career working in a UT Southwestern Emergency Room in 1984, and since 2002, has specialized in working in the dialysis clinic. She is known for showing compassion and empathy for her patients.

"Kidney failure patients often have diabetes and heart disease, too," she says. "Between their travel and treatment time, it's often tough for them to manage. I strive to be a happy face and show compassion for them when life is so very hard."

After more than three decades in the field, Ms. Lohrenz encourages others to pursue nursing.

"Nurses are well respected. There are such a vast amount of careers within nursing. Think about where you want to end up and how to get there. It's worth the work," she says.

Even, Ms. Lohrenz adds, if it means taking a round-about road from Nigeria.



## Shelia Martin

Certified Medical Office Assistant  
Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive  
Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology

### A passion for exceptional patient caregiving

By Ashley Green-Jones

Since her junior year of high school, Shelia Martin has dedicated over 70,000 hours of care and customer service to the patients of UT Southwestern.

Ms. Martin began her career at UTSW in 1984 as a Research Technician in Biochemistry-Pharmacology through a work program at school. Fifteen years later, she transferred to the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, where she recently worked as a Certified Medical Office Assistant. Recently retired, Ms. Martin escorted patients to exam rooms and performed tasks such as conducting previsit interviews, measuring vital signs, and documenting information.

"I truly enjoyed interacting with patients and their loved ones," Ms. Martin says. "I have a passion for patient care. I got so energized when I came to work and saw a patient's health improving and their smiling face."

She describes herself as friendly, outgoing, conscientious, and honest. A testament to her comical side, she laughs at a "hairy" situation she remembers with Dr. David Miller, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

"I walked in Dr. Miller's office once and my wig fell off," she says. "It left me speechless, but I laugh at it now."

Her most rewarding memory was when she was recognized for her work ethic – twice.

"My manager nominated me for going over and beyond the Department's expectations during my 21 years with Ob/Gyn," Ms. Martin says. "I can honestly say I feel grateful, honored, and appreciated."

No longer working at UTSW, these days she enjoys attending movies and concerts, shopping, and spending time with her family. Her hobbies include bowling, walking, reading, and going to the gym.

As a meticulous person who loves to help, encourage, and motivate, Ms. Martin says her specialty is making people happy, driven by her desire to "see others as happy as me."





## Thelma Morgan

Medical Transcriptionist  
Clinical Laboratory Services

### At work and in life, she goes the extra miles – literally

By Lori Sundeen Soderbergh

Some people are known for their ability to go the extra mile. Thelma Morgan has won multiple awards during her 35-year tenure at UT Southwestern, including one past award aptly called “Going the Extra Mile.” To cap it off, she won the 2020 Heart Month Step Challenge with an impressive one-day total of 85,637 steps. That’s 40 miles!

“I wanted to do the Step Challenge in honor of my dad – my hero – whom I lost to a massive heart attack four years ago. All the time when I was walking, I said to myself: ‘I’m doing it for Pops,’” Ms. Morgan says.

Her Step Challenge reward? Breakfast tacos for her team delivered on March 6 by Dr. John Warner, Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs.

Ms. Morgan’s determined spirit makes her a valuable addition to any team. And that’s not just for walking. Her colleagues describe her as friendly, helpful, and pleasing.

“I love interacting with others. I can truly say that I am a ‘people person,’” she says with a smile. Which, by the way, she also won an award for – “The Smiler Award” – while working at the former St. Paul University Hospital.

Ms. Morgan’s journey to UT Southwestern came via Brookhaven, Mississippi, where she was raised. She relocated to Dallas in the 1970s and began her UTSW career in 1984 as Secretary for the former Department of Nutrition Services. During her career, she’s worked in the former Centers of Excellence Heart Institute as Department Secretary and in the Department of Pathology as Medical Secretary. She enjoys her current position as Medical Transcriptionist in Clinical Laboratory Services at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

“Helping, encouraging, and being of assistance to others are my strong suits, which I love wearing,” says Ms. Morgan.

After work, Ms. Morgan loves spending time with family and friends, singing, cooking, baking, bowling, playing board games, traveling, reading, and writing. She’s a self-described “Hallmark movie junkie.” A dedicated fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers and the New Orleans Saints, Ms. Morgan has also been a member of the Concord Church of Dallas for 41 years, where she enjoys singing in the choir and serving as a Bible study facilitator. She’s a proud mom of one son, Jermaine. In addition, she volunteers at local nursing homes and lives by her favorite saying: “People may forget what you said or what you did, but never how you made them feel.”



## Daisy Reodica

Clinical Laboratory Specialist  
Clinical Pathology Laboratory, Zale Lipshy Pavilion –  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

### Moving with purpose, pride is in her DNA

By Courtney Borchert

Humble and hardworking, Daisy Reodica is full of compassion for others, which shines through when she speaks. And because providing excellent patient care is always her goal, looking out for patients’ best interests comes naturally.

Ms. Reodica works as a Clinical Laboratory Specialist in the Clinical Pathology Laboratory at Zale Lipshy Pavilion – William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. She provides inpatient phlebotomy services and laboratory support.

Her first job at UT Southwestern involved specimen processing and assisting with reports as a Research Technician. Shortly after the official opening of Zale Lipshy in 1989, she transferred to her current role. Quickly, she found her calling.

“Just the thought of helping someone and making them happy during my shift is more than enough to brighten my day,” she says. “I love the facility, and I feel honored to be connected with such a prestigious institution to help advance medicine.”

Ms. Reodica says she contributes to a culture of camaraderie in her workspace by going above and beyond what is asked of her. She often can be found organizing work areas, optimizing laboratory orders, and taking extra steps to minimize discomfort for patients during a blood draw. Her mantra is do it once, do it right.

She recalls a special awards ceremony during the early years of her tenure at UTSW that has stayed with her as a testament to her work ethic. Ms. Reodica’s team voted her as the employee who best embodied the “workaholic award.”

“I just love my work,” she says. “Whatever I do at work, I enjoy – every aspect, from helping patients, to helping co-workers, to helping support staff on the floor.”

Born in the Philippines to a large family, Ms. Reodica is the fourth of nine children. Outside of work, she serves as a caregiver for a family member and spoils her three Maltese terriers.



## Lipcy Varkey

Pharmacy Technician Coordinator  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, Pharmacy  
Services

### Keeping a watchful eye on patient medications

By Patrick Wascovich

Since the mid-1980s, tens of thousands of hospitalized patients at UT Southwestern have likely had their medications handled under the watchful eyes and meticulous disposition of Lipcy Varkey.

“I started working at St. Paul University Hospital as a Pharmacy Courier in 1984 and after a few months became a Pharmacy Technician,” she says. “The best part of my job is working with people and making sure the medications are sent to our patients in a timely manner.”

Over the past 35 years – first at the former St. Paul University Hospital and later at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital – Ms. Varkey has worked in many areas of Pharmacy Services, including the central pharmacy, IV/chemo room, operating room pharmacy, narcotic vault, and purchasing. The past several years she worked as a Central Pharmacy Technician Coordinator and is now a Controlled Substances Pharmacy Technician Coordinator.

“I am proud to be a part of a highly regarded institution and Pharmacy Services,” Ms. Varkey says. “UT Southwestern has given me the opportunity to grow in my career and advance in different roles.”

Described by co-workers as dependable, friendly, helpful, and respectful to others, Ms. Varkey began her health care career in a vastly different workplace.

“When I started, Pharmacy Services had limited technology and resources,” she recalls. “I still remember transferring total parenteral nutrition solutions using a vacuum pump and manually crediting medications. Now Pharmacy Services is completely different, with all new technologies.”

Ms. Varkey, who has a degree in zoology from the University of Kerala in India, loves to travel. She has visited several countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates.

She and her husband, Samuel, have been married for 37 years. They have three adult children, all born at St. Paul. “My children – Rachel, Rebecca, and Matthew – all volunteered at St. Paul, and both my daughters chose careers in the medical field, one as a pharmacist and one who graduated from medical school in May,” Ms. Varkey says.

In her free time, she likes to read and is involved with her church and family. Also this year, she took on yet another important role – “I became a grandmother!”





**Freddy Vidaud**

Office Assistant  
Department of Pathology

## On the move for three decades of commitment

By Nyschicka Jordan

Freddy Vidaud spent the past 35 years traveling and walking around the campus of UT Southwestern and the Medical District while working as an Office Assistant in the Department of Pathology, where he daily delivered mail and confidential materials. It's a steady role that allowed a sense of calm.

"I like that I got to move around a lot, but after 35 years it takes a toll on your body. Yet, I am glad I didn't have a desk job," he says. "I enjoyed working at UT Southwestern because I had a lot of friends and saw different people on my runs and liked seeing experiments in the labs."

In 1985, Mr. Vidaud joined UT Southwestern on the recommendation of a family friend who had been a doctor here. Over the years, he's seen many changes across campus, as well as among faculty and staff.

"I like everything I see around here and have seen many buildings go up with additions of new clinics – so many changes that I can't remember them all," he says.

Recently retired, Mr. Vidaud is honored to be recognized for his contributions to making things at UTSW run smoothly.

"It feels good that I accomplished being here for so long, and I felt like I was part of a family because other people helped me a lot," he says.

His former supervisor, Linda Jones, says Mr. Vidaud was always dependable.

"Pathology had complete reliance on Freddy to handle this needed service to the Department, and he was extremely dedicated to his role, as exhibited by his continued 35 years of service to our Department," Ms. Jones says.

Mr. Vidaud has some simple advice for staying committed to one role for so many years: "Keep at it, don't give up," he says.



**Linda Watkins**

Senior Grants and Contracts Specialist  
Center for the Genetics of Host Defense

## A passion for vital research, people, and violets

By Deborah Wormser

In her role as a Senior Grants and Contracts Specialist in the Center for the Genetics of Host Defense, Linda Watkins helps keep vital research going.

A graduate of Texas A&M University, Ms. Watkins first started working at UT Southwestern as a Research Technician II in the Department of Pathology. She then advanced to Senior Research Scientist and a Lab Manager in the Department of Pharmacology.

"Unless they know me well, people don't realize that I spent more than 25 years in the lab before transitioning to the administrative side of research eight years ago," she says.

In 1985, she met her husband, David, while working on a research project at the institution. The couple have a son, Tanner, who is completing his master's degree at the University of North Texas.

Her favorite thing about UT Southwestern? "The people," she says. "I have met so many talented, interesting, and nice people – they make my day!"

Most of her UTSW colleagues describe her as quiet, dependable, personable, and detail-oriented, Ms. Watkins says.

"I love to read books, especially mysteries and science fiction, on my lunch hour and while riding the train to and from work each day," she adds. Other hobbies include cooking, gardening, and refinishing old furniture. She also enjoys Saturday morning boot camp workouts and hiking with her Labrador retriever, Kenlee.

She grows lots of plants in her office – especially violets. Had she not pursued a career in scientific research, she would have liked to have been a landscape architect.

"Creating beautiful and relaxing sanctuaries for others to enjoy would be so satisfying. We all need to take time to relax in amazing surroundings to nurture a positive mindset," Ms. Watkins says.

When she retires, she plans to visit every national park in the U.S. and travel the world so that she can enjoy those beautiful and relaxing sanctuaries.



**Wesley Witten**

Standardized Patient Trainer  
Simulation Center

## Part acting coach, part medical skills teacher

By Patrick Wascovich

Wesley Witten's official job title might be "Trainer," but his duties include that of teacher, coach, and experienced mentor as well.

Mr. Witten is tasked with preparing UT Southwestern's rotating cadre of "standardized patients" – campus employees who are not actual patients. These "patient" actors present mock symptoms to learners who then try to identify and diagnose various illnesses, diseases, and medical conditions called for in UT Southwestern's Simulation Center, one of the largest in the country.

"I'm the standardized patients' acting coach in a way," he says. "We're testing students on their clinical skills. They have to gather information about our standardized patients. The medical students have to ask them about what they are experiencing, and our 'patients' are trained to give symptoms according to their ailments, so a good memory helps."

Mr. Witten joined the UTSW community in 1984, initially working for General Services "doing a little bit of everything, mostly in Printing Services," he recalls.

Soon, however, he began working as a standardized patient himself in his spare time. It wasn't long before he was asked to teach others how to best represent "patients" to aspiring medical professionals.

"I've never met a stranger and I'm always willing to lend a hand," he says of the opportunity that turned into a job title. "The best part of my work continues to be the people I get to meet and train. And I'm still energized every day that I'm at UT Southwestern and just how much it has grown over the years; it's great being on a winning team."

Since September 2018, the standardized patients have worked in the 49,000-square-foot Simulation Center. The West Campus facility has efficiently consolidated training while making life easier for Mr. Witten.

"It's state-of-the-art and very convenient, with everything in one place," he says. "We don't lose students and we don't lose 'patients' disoriented on campus."

Mr. Witten likes watching all the local sport teams and is a lifelong fan of them all. He also plays a little golf when he can and enjoys viewing a good movie.





## Chester Smith

Utility Station Operator/Central Data Acquisition System (CDAS)  
CDAS & Controls



## Robert Webb

Maintenance Supervisor  
Electric Shop



## Sandra Boyd

Transporter  
Patient Transport

**First UTSW job:** Working in Housekeeping.

**Best part of my job:** Meeting different people from a variety of backgrounds.

**Best memory:** I remember a retirement party that I went to some years back. I had so much fun with my co-workers.

**How co-workers describe me:** "All that and then some!" and also "A bundle of sunshine."

**Recipe for success:** Being patient and caring.

**What energizes me at work:** My co-workers, who really help to keep me motivated.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Being a technologist, because I think they do such outstanding jobs.

**I'm really good at:** Cooking.

**Claim to fame:** Being the awesome aunt that I am!

**Hobby or passion:** My family and my church. I also enjoy traveling.

**Surprising fact:** I can sing.



## Colleen Debes

Registered Nurse II  
Adult Cystic Fibrosis Clinic (SOTP)

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Research Nurse.

**Best part of my job:** Having fun co-workers who work hard together to make a positive difference for our patients, and working with great doctors who really care about our patients.

**Best memory:** Meeting people from lots of different departments over the years.

**How co-workers describe me:** I think they would say that I am a strong patient advocate, and also that I'm dedicated and hardworking.

**What energizes me at work:** Our cystic fibrosis patients motivate me to work hard. It is an exciting time to be a part of the CF community as life-changing therapies are approved for our patients.

**I'm really good at:** Being a patient advocate and volunteer.

**Hobby or passion:** Hiking, traveling, and volunteering with my husband of over 25 years. We have two sons and a yellow Lab.



## Connie Cervantes

Clinical Data Specialist  
Clinical Research Office Phase 1

**First UTSW job:** Data Manager in the Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Division.

**Best part of my job:** It's the research currently being done for patients with cancers and other diseases that is making a positive impact.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dedicated, loyal, hardworking, dependable, a good person, friend, sister, daughter, mom, and grandmom. I have two daughters and a sister who work at UTSW. One daughter works in Pathology, the other in the Clinical Research Office, and my sister is in Pediatrics, so that's been a great experience to have them so close to me.

**Recipe for success:** I'm passionate and driven.

**What energizes me at work:** The people at work, the friends, my family, life, and the joy of having another great day. You take the good and the bad and you savor all of it!

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Being able to cure all illnesses.

**I'm really good at:** Taking care of my family. I love my family so much, that's always a priority for me.

**Claim to fame:** Being a mom and grandma.

**Hobbies:** Gardening, fishing, travel, home decor, and being with family.

**Surprising fact:** I know a lot about cars.



## Katawna Devereaux

Radiology Imaging Scheduler  
Centralized Scheduling Office,  
Patient Access Services

**First UTSW job:** Working in Radiology Medical Coding/Billing.

**Best part of my job:** My co-workers' personalities and cultures. I appreciate everyone's individuality.

**Unusual memory:** I assisted an out-of-state patient with scheduling a STAT appointment. She was so appreciative that she came to thank me and praised me to my supervisor. I was blown away and brought to tears.

**How co-workers describe me:** They call me "Mother Teresa" and "Ms. FEMA," because I am helpful, caring, understanding, and motivational.

**Recipe for success:** I am adaptable to change, self-motivated, well-rounded, and performance driven.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Being on the front lines of patient care, to help with the healing process – not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually.

**I'm really good at:** Training team members. I take great pride in listening, understanding, being a knowledgeable resource, and ensuring their success.

**Surprising fact:** I have been the youth praise dance director at my church for 15 years. The funny thing is, I knew nothing about praise dancing. I did research and took classes.







## Jaime R. Downie

Superintendent  
Facilities Management Utilities  
Department

**First UTSW job:** Maintenance worker.

**How co-workers describe me:** Passionate and caring because I take pride in what I do and I try to help people whenever I can.

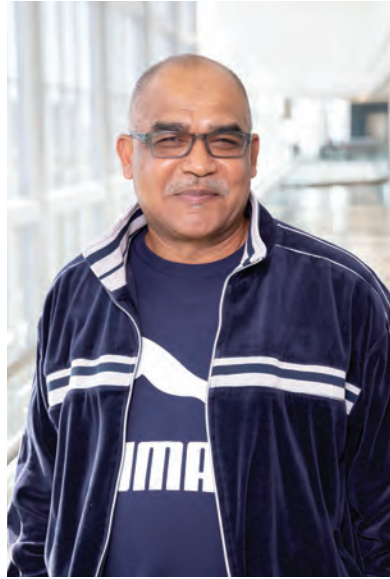
**Recipe for success:** I have a positive attitude about life in general, and I turn negative situations into positives because I always try to make things better. I feel like there is always a bright side to everything.

**What energizes me at work:** Everyone works as a team and we work toward the same goal: to be successful in whatever we do. It is such a positive environment to be in – it gives me a sense of accomplishment.

**I'm really good at:** I am really good with my hands. I like to take things apart and look at the mechanics to see what makes them work.

**Hobbies:** I like doing home renovations, spending time with family and friends, and traveling and doing new things with my wife.

**Final note:** UT Southwestern is a great place to work, and I have seen it grow tremendously through the years. I have enjoyed being an employee here, and one of the most satisfying things to me is I know it will be here for years to come. I am proud to be a part of this great institution.



## Kim Edwards

Accountant III  
Internal Medicine, Finance Office

**First UTSW job:** I started working in Medical Service Research & Development Plan (MSRDP) as an Accounting Clerk in 1989.

**Best memory:** Two of my best memories from UTSW are the eight years working with Dr. Alfred Gilman and all the other great people involved in the Alliance for Cellular Signaling (AFCS). The other was in 1994 when Dr. Gilman won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his part in the discovery of G proteins. All the festivities in Dallas and the pictures and stories from Stockholm, Sweden, were so exciting.

**Hobbies:** Outside of work, I enjoy traveling, gardening, and playing games with family and friends.

**Final note:** At UTSW, you have so many opportunities. I started as an Accounting Clerk in MSRDP, went to Basic Research in Pharmacology as an Administrator, left as a Financial Manager, and now I work in the largest department on campus, Internal Medicine, which has a combination of clinical and research faculty.



## Danny Green

Operating Room Attendant  
Surgery, Zale Lipshy Pavilion –  
William P. Clements Jr.  
University Hospital

**First job at UTSW:** Working in Housekeeping.

**Best part of the job:** I love being here every day and the people I work with.

**Best memory:** After working eight years in Housekeeping, I moved up to my current position.

**Recipe for success:** You have to love your job to do what you do every day. This job is amazing.

**What energizes me at work:** Doing something that I truly love. I'm blessed to be here after so many years.

**Final note:** I've always had a love for this hospital. Watching it being built from the ground up and finding my place here since the very beginning has been amazing. Thirty years is a great milestone. I'm looking forward to the many more years to come.



## Myria Lynette Hadnot

Patient Care Technician  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, 6 Blue/Green-Surgical Specialty

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Patient Care Tech.

**Best part of my job:** Giving patient care and working with my St. Paul family.

**Best memory:** Doing daily stretches and exercises on our unit. It brings us together.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dependable and resourceful.

**Recipe for success:** Joy. I know that God will never leave me, nor will he forsake me.

**What energizes me at work:** My co-workers. I enjoy seeing and being around them. They make me laugh.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Finding the medicine to heal cancer.

**I'm really good at:** Connecting with my patients.

**Claim to fame:** My relationships with God and my daughter.

**Hobby or passion:** Spending time with my family.

**Surprising fact:** That I don't know how to cook at all.

**Final note:** Over these many years, this hospital system has been good to me.

## Leah Hayden

Accountant III  
Hospital Financial Operations

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Receptionist on the first Mobile Mammography Unit at the former St. Paul University Hospital.

**Unusual memory:** The first mobile unit was just a big RV. We lost a spare tire once on LBJ Freeway, and got the RV stuck under a low overpass. We took it to San Antonio to do mammograms for some nuns and got to stay in the convent. I was surprised at how much fun we had!

**How co-workers describe me:** Creative, thoughtful.

**Recipe for success:** Adaptability. It has helped me successfully navigate through changes at UT Southwestern.

**What energizes me at work:** Learning something new.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Accounting, so I could pass the CPA exam without much studying.

**I'm really good at:** Planning parties and making special occasions memorable.

**Claim to fame:** Winning the cubicle decorating contest at Christmastime and decorating our office for holidays and birthdays.

**Hobby or passion:** I'm crazy about cats. I have four, all rescues. I also enjoy reading and watching old classic movies.

**Surprising fact:** I have an identical twin.



## Nancy Neal

Nurse Manager  
William P. Clements Jr. University  
Hospital, 12 Green

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Labor and Delivery Scrub Technician.

**Best part of my job:** My team relationships.

**Unusual memory:** Having to push a bed carrying a resident along with a patient in labor by myself while I was 8 months pregnant. (The resident was holding the baby's head, with birth imminent.) Everything turned out fine, but I can imagine how that looked! I think I may have taken out a couple of walls back at the former St. Paul University Hospital.

**How co-workers describe me:** Happy, fun to be around.

**Recipe for success:** Positivity for sure. I see the glass half-full.

**What energizes me at work:** My team and our patients.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Math. I have a mental block, and it would help me with the finance part of my job.

**I'm really good at:** Building teams.

**Claim to fame:** Raising three really good kids.

**Hobby or passion:** Gardening.

**Surprising fact:** Before I switched to Medical Surgical Manager, I was a Labor and Delivery Nurse and Manager for 20-plus years because I loved it so much after serving as an interim manager.







## Debby Noble

Manager Clinical Research  
Plastic Surgery

**First UTSW job:** I started as a Research Technician III in the Department of Plastic Surgery.

**Best part about my job:** I love the variety and the challenges! And I have enjoyed working with faculty and staff in my department.

**Unusual memory:** It was the year we had research fellows working in our lab from all over the world – it was like the United Nations in the Plastic Surgery lab. We took them all to the State Fair of Texas for some team building.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dependable, always looking on the bright side.

**Recipe for success:** Keeping a positive attitude.

**What energizes me at work:** Creative problem-solving in the lab energizes me. And I love working with the high school students, college students, and medical students who come to work in our lab.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Playing a musical instrument.

**Hobby or passion:** My sons, daughters-in-law, and grandson! Scrapbooking, painting, reading, various other arts and crafts.

**Surprising fact:** I worked as a clown when I was in high school and I made balloon animals.



## Kim Stewart

Medical Technologist  
Microbiology Lab

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Medical Technologist.

**Best memory:** Years ago, former faculty member Dr. Richard Jones would come around on Christmas Day and play his saxophone.

**Best part of my job:** I like learning about how the bacteria and fungi we identify affect the disease process and treatment of our patients. I also like feeling that we are part of a big team that contributes to the patient's health and recovery.

**Recipe for success:** I am very detail-oriented and concerned about patient care.

**What energizes me at work:** Organizing anything.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Playing the guitar, because it seems like a lot of fun.

**I'm really good at:** Making a really good banana pudding from scratch. It's my grandmother's recipe.

**Hobby or passion:** I enjoy decorating and DIY projects.

**Final note:** My great co-workers are another reason why I like my job.



## Stephen Ostermann

Research Technician I  
Internal Medicine – Infectious Diseases

**First job at UTSW:** Research Technician I in Internal Medicine – Gastroenterology.

**Best part about my job:** I especially enjoy the people I work with and encounter every day at UT Southwestern.

**Unusual memory:** I was once bitten by a hamster in the Internal Medicine lab when I was moving it. I guess it didn't like me being friendly, as I am with everyone I meet!

**Recipe for success:** I have been blessed with a happy, optimistic attitude and a helpful heart. I always have a smile on my face and find each new day at work to be a blessing, an opportunity to learn something new, and meet new people.

**I'm really good at:** Making friends. I collect friends everywhere I go! Between work, church, family, and community activities, it's rare that I go somewhere where I don't run into someone I know. I also love to bake and bring my baked goods to co-workers all the time.

**Hobbies:** I volunteer many hours each week at my church – St. Monica in Dallas – and serve various groups including the Knights of Columbus, the St. Monica youth group, and as an usher during services. I also love to bowl and go bowling regularly.

**Surprising fact:** I'm one of 16 children.



## Brenda S. Thompson

Advanced Practice Provider  
University Hospital Heart and Lung Clinic

**First UTSW job:** Working at the Heart and Lung Clinic.

**Best part of my job:** Improving our patients' quality of life and hopefully decreasing mortality.

**Unusual memory:** Standing in the hallway after being hired and the physician at that time asked: What do we need before we can see our first patient? My response was everything that will make the patient feel like they are part of a family and someone cares about their health.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dedicated and caring. The Medical Director at that time and I developed the Heart Failure Program at UT Southwestern. Now we have grown with multiple providers, nurses, and staff who provide excellent care to our patients. It was a labor of love developing, and I am very proud of all the accomplishments we have made over the years.

**Recipe for success:** Perseverance and commitment. It took so much effort in the beginning to get other providers to allow their patients to be seen in our Heart Failure Program, but with perseverance and commitment, we succeeded.

**Claim to fame:** Having a wonderful marriage of 48 years, three exceptional children, and nine beautiful grandchildren. Also starting the Heart Failure Program at UTSW.

**Surprising fact:** I love roller-skating.



## Tom Raz

Manager of Information Resources  
Health Systems Information Resources

**First UTSW job:** I came on board as a programmer to help with custom reports for the financial management team in the MSRDP (Medical Service Research & Development Plan) via a language called "MUMPS." This was back when we were using the IDX system for professional billing and ambulatory scheduling on "dumb terminals."

**Best part about my job:** The people, especially those on our team. I admire the heroes who advance and maintain systems that help our users save and improve lives.

**Unusual memory:** Dec. 31, 1999. We had been preparing for "Y2K" for much of the year, and while friends outside the tech field enjoyed the last parties of the millennium, we were at work, preparing for the worst. A command center was set up, where upper leadership in suits watched the news and the countdown. The clock struck midnight. A few tests confirmed that all was well. I grabbed big handfuls of shredded paper from the copy room, darted into the command center, and hurled it over the leaders, wishing them Happy New Year!

**Recipe for success:** I like to think outside the box, questioning assumptions and considering alternatives. This provides a wider view of opportunities and ramifications – and an endless supply of puns.

**Claim to fame:** My team replaced my cube nameplate with "Darth Raz" when I wasn't looking. Does infamy qualify as "fame"?

**Hobby:** Yoga every day.

**Surprising fact:** I'm pretty good at fire dancing (although not good enough to quit my day job).

**Final note:** I've been eligible to retire, but I keep putting it off.



## Liz Villanueva

Unit Secretary  
Day Surgery, Zale Lipshy Pavilion –  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

**First UTSW job:** A Telemetry Technician at Zale, 6th Floor.

**Best part of my job:** The amazing nurses, physicians, and staff whom I get to work with.

**Unusual memory:** One time a rack collapsed after a doctor put a heavy chart on it. Papers and charts went everywhere! It was a mess, but he helped pick up everything. We laugh about it to this day.

**How co-workers describe me:** Resourceful, goes above and beyond. They trust that I know exactly who to get in touch with to get the job done.

**Recipe for success:** Persistence. I work at something until it is accomplished.

**What energizes me at work:** The relationships I have formed with my co-workers.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Interior decorating. It is something I really enjoy.

**I'm really good at:** Cooking. I enjoy sharing what I make.

**Claim to fame:** My carrot cake.

**Hobby or passion:** Spending free time with friends and family.

**Surprising fact:** I enjoy finding old household items and updating them to display in my home and to give as gifts.







## Larry Wine

Logistics Technician  
Logistics and Value Analysis

**First UTSW job:** Working in Housekeeping.

**Best part of my job:** Meeting new people, and making sure I have done all I can to put a smile on the faces of patients and their families.

**Best memory:** During Christmastime, when all the patients and families come back to gather for the dinner UT Southwestern has at the end of the year.

**How co-workers describe me:** Very funny and a very hard worker. Easy to get along with. I always have a smile for them and a concerned heart for the work they do.

**Recipe for success:** Being honest in what I do.

**What energizes me at work:** Seeing my co-workers' faces. They make it easy to come in and be an employee here.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Managing a company.

**I'm really good at:** Painting and cleaning.

**Hobby or passion:** Barbecuing at home and playing dominoes with my friends.

**Surprising fact:** That I'm retiring.



## Snow Adams

Physical Therapist  
Physical Therapy Services

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Staff Physical Therapist.

**Best part of my job:** I feel valued by management for the work I do, and respected by my peers.

**Best memory:** Going on many memorable vacations with my co-workers.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dependable, proactive, and a reliable resource.

**What energizes me at work:** The positive interactions I have with my co-workers and patients.

**Recipe for success:** Taking time to see things from all points of view.

**I'm really good at:** Being able to provide my patients with the information they need to help in their recovery.

**Claim to fame:** My co-workers might say it's my lemon squares.

**Hobby or passion:** I love to bake. I also enjoy playing Texas Hold 'em.

**Surprising fact:** I learned to belly dance and went skydiving in my mid-30s.

**Final note:** A dear friend once told me that you take your first job for the experience, the second for the money, and the third for your happiness. I believe I found all three opportunities here at UT Southwestern.



## Yohannes Alema

Medical Technologist  
Transfusion Medicine

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Medical Technologist.

**Best part of my job:** I really enjoy being part of the transplant team.

**Best memory:** Participating in the Heart Walk.

**How co-workers describe me:** I think they would consider me to be a team player. I am always willing to help my co-workers.

**Recipe for success:** No matter what I do, I am very dedicated.

**What energizes me at work:** Working as part of a team to provide the best patient care possible.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Being multi-lingual, so I can communicate better with whomever I encounter.

**I'm really good at:** Respecting people regardless of their background.

**Hobby or passion:** I love to travel.

**Surprising fact:** I studied overseas – in Russia.



## Mary Kathryn "MK" Adcock

Administrative Associate  
Simulation Center

**First UTSW job:** I remember interviewing for an Administrative Assistant position in Emergency Medicine with former Professor of Surgery Dr. Ellen Taliaferro, who just happened to be a cousin to a family I knew where I lived at the time in Oklahoma. Wow, it is a small world!

**Best part of my job:** My current position is with the Simulation Center in West Campus Building 3. This job is very interesting and exciting. It is awesome to see the many different things used to train medical students and residents.

**How co-workers describe me:** I have been described as having a "we-can-get-it-done" attitude.

**What energizes me at work:** With my job, there are always challenges and something new as we receive new medical students and residents each year.

**Hobby:** I like to travel and look forward to doing more of that when I retire someday. I would like to go to Italy, Paris, and Germany, to name a few.



## Sheila G. Allen

Senior Grants and Contract Specialist  
Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute/  
Neuroscience Translational Research Center

**First UTSW job:** I started in 1994 as an Accountant II in Grants Accounting, originally in the Frito Lay building.

**Best part of my job:** Every day there is a new and exciting challenge that brings opportunity to grow. If you stop learning, you stop growing.

**How co-workers describe me:** A little sassy and friendly, as I don't meet a stranger. Also, creative as I am charged with decorating the office for holidays and events.

**Recipe for success:** Adaptability is an important aspect to my success in the world of research. I am able to adjust and make changes in my work, workload, manager changes, and different personalities that come with the job.

**What energizes me at work:** My energy is charged by my co-workers. I work with the greatest co-workers/friends/sisters/family in the entire UT System.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** It would be in carpentry, as I have always wanted a purple tool belt.

**I'm really good at:** Listening and calming down friends, family, and co-workers when they get in a frenzy.

**Claim to fame:** In the same year, I won first place in the bra decorating contest for breast cancer awareness and first place in mixed media in the On My Own Time art competition.

**Passion:** My passion is studying and reading God's word with the purpose of living it out. I also love crocheting, cycling, and collecting betta fish.

**Surprising fact:** People would be surprised to know I rode my bike 55 miles for my 55th birthday.







## Dornetta H. Augustine

Clinical Staff Coordinator  
Ob/Gyn Division of Female Pelvic Medicine  
and Reconstructive Surgery

**First UTSW job:** Phlebotomist in Family Planning and Maternal-Fetal Medicine.

**Best part of my job:** I love the fact that I've worked in the same department my entire time here at UTSW, I love serving others the most, and I'm always willing to go an extra mile when needed.

**Unusual memory:** When I was a Phlebotomist in Family Planning, I dressed up as a vampire one year for Halloween. Every time I went to the lobby to call a patient to take her blood, it was pure laughter.

**How co-workers describe me:** Always ready to jump in to offer assistance when needed. Easily goes above and beyond her duties to help patients or co-workers in need.

**Recipe for success:** I think it's my Southern upbringing because I was taught that honesty, hard work, thank you, and a sincere heart go a long way in life. Be honest in everything you do.

**What energizes me at work:** To be able to serve others and make a difference because it pays off in the end.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Cooking, because it's a passion I have and I can cook just about anything that I've ever eaten at any restaurant I've visited.

**Claim to fame:** My jerk chicken.

**Hobby:** Volunteering with my church.

**Surprising fact:** I love drag racing and fast cars.



## Shonna Cade

Clinical Staff Coordinator  
Solid Organ Transplant Administration

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Unit Secretary in Oncology.

**Best part of my job:** The special relationship that I have with my co-workers and that we all have with our patients and their family members.

**Funniest memory:** Putting a "Honk your horn" sign on a co-worker's car for her birthday. Cars honked at her the entire commute. She didn't know why until someone pointed to the sign.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dependable, always willing to help or find help.

**Recipe for success:** Overthinking things. I am prepared for any situation.

**What energizes me at work:** Challenges. They keep your mind stimulated and keep you on your toes.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Nutrition. Good nutrition makes your mind and body function better for years.

**Claim to fame:** My daughter volunteered here when she was in high school, then worked here while she was studying to be a nurse, and now she works on the 8th Floor as a Registered Nurse while also going to nurse practitioner school.



## Derk Binns, Ph.D.

Senior Research Associate  
Department of Pharmacology, Cobb Lab

**First UTSW job:** Lab technician in the Center for Human Nutrition.

**Best part of my job:** I have consistently been given the freedom to explore my own ideas in the projects I have worked on.

**Best memory:** The day I received my Ph.D. in biochemistry.

**How co-workers describe me:** Friendly and industrious.

**Recipe for success:** My tenacity in dealing with difficult scientific problems.

**What energizes me at work:** The prospect of solving clinically relevant problems.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Biophysical characterization of protein interactions.

**I'm really good at:** Data analysis.

**Claim to fame:** Elucidating the kinetic pathway of the membrane-severing enzyme, dynamin.

**Hobby:** Reading.



## Rachel Cassady

Department Administrator  
Microbiology

**First UTSW job:** Senior Administrative Assistant, Division of Cardiology.

**Best part of my job:** Definitely, the people! My department is full of amazingly wonderful faculty. My Chair is the best boss anyone could ask for, and my staff are incredibly talented. We really are one big happy family!

**Unusual memory:** It was when the North Campus underground parking lot flooded several years ago. I was parked on level P3, and we had to take the stairs down to get to our cars. The water was up to my knees, I had to leave my shoes in the stairwell, and I got to my car just in time before it would have flooded. It was a crazy experience!

**How co-workers describe me:** Kind and helpful. I always treat people how I want to be treated, and they know I will help them in any way I can.

**What energizes me at work:** Deadlines. I do my best work under pressure.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** I would be a sommelier. I love wine tasting – and the science behind winemaking and food pairings is fascinating.

**I'm really good at:** Cooking. I love making up my own recipes.

**Passion:** I love cats! My family and I are true cat people. We have seven of our own and we always end up feeding the neighborhood strays.

**Surprising fact:** I love going to rock concerts. Metallica, Foo Fighters, and Van Halen were some of my favorites.



## Felicia Burns

Health Unit Coordinator  
Presurgical Testing, William P. Clements Jr.  
University Hospital

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Patient Care Technician.

**Best memory:** I first met my now-husband in 1998 in Room 615 on 6 North Telemetry at the former St. Paul University Hospital, where his mother was a patient. On 6-15-1999, in front of my co-workers, he asked me to marry him. I was speechless. Most of the room yelled, "What are you going to say?" On 6-15-2020, we marked our 20th wedding anniversary.

**How co-workers describe me:** Demanding, funny. I need to have things in order, and funny, because I love to make everyone laugh.

**What energizes me at work:** Our patients, especially those with a good joke.

**Claim to fame:** I am a serious patient advocate, and at times I go above the grade to assist them.

**Hobby or passion:** I am a licensed chaplain and do prison ministry. I also visit patients weekly at a nursing facility, sing in choirs, and teach youth Sunday School.

**Final note:** I have three sons and seven grandchildren. My two youngest sons joined the Navy. One is a Chief Petty Officer and currently deployed; the other completed his five years of service in November 2019.



## Valecia Dupree

Certified Health Unit Coordinator  
Psychiatry Unit

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Health Unit Coordinator.

**Funniest memory:** The staff and I played a Halloween joke on the Housekeeping supervisor. We told her bats were in the building. She came and asked where they were, and then saw our paper-cutout bats hanging around. The expression on her face was priceless. She laughed so hard her stomach hurt.

**How co-workers describe me:** The conductor. I'm the first point of contact for patients and their families.

**What energizes me at work:** Interacting with people. I enjoy helping patients and their families.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Pharmacy education. Medications should be further explained to patients, such as risks of taking sound-alike/look-alike drugs.

**Claim to fame:** Being on the cover of UTSW Campus News as part of the 75th anniversary campaign. I was recognized throughout campus. That felt pretty cool.

**Hobby or passion:** My husband, Rickey Dupree Sr., and my sons, Rickey and Roderick – they're the core of who I am. I also thank God for my UTSW family. The laughter, teamwork, compassion, and purpose – I couldn't ask for a better fit.







## Beth Hernandez

Registered Nurse II  
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital,  
Labor and Delivery

**First UTSW job:** Working as an RN in the Critical Care Unit at the former St. Paul University Hospital.

**Best part of my job:** Helping new mommas bring their precious new babies into the world.

**Unusual memory:** When I worked in the Medical Surgical Intensive Care Unit, we had a potluck for the Fourth of July and all brought food. One of our new RN interns thought we took turns bringing in food, so on July 5 she brought in a bunch of Whoppers from Burger King. After that, July 5 became "Whopper Day."

**How co-workers describe me:** Reliable, and calm in stressful situations.

**What energizes me at work:** The excitement of a mother coming in, ready to have a baby at any moment.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Being a health coach, so I could help families change their family trees!

**Hobby or passion:** I love to mountain bike, and I make candles as a hobby.

**Surprising fact:** I attended a private boarding school for high school.



## Kiran J. Kaur, Ph.D.

Senior Research Scientist  
Eugene McDermott Center for Human  
Growth and Development, Chahrour Lab

**First UTSW job:** Postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Cell Biology.

**Best part about my job:** Nothing is routine.

**Best memory:** Always feeling challenged and working with students.

**How co-workers describe me:** Always helpful and keeps things running smoothly in the lab.

**Recipe for success:** Never feeling bored and always feeling challenged.

**What energizes me at work:** Working with students.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Having the experiments work the first time.

**I'm really good at:** Listening to people and challenging the students to do their best.

**Hobbies:** Reading, knitting, and listening to different kinds of music.

**Surprising fact:** I have lived in five different states.



## Pamela Jennings

Grants & Contracts Specialist  
Department of Neuroscience

**First UTSW job:** Administrative Assistant, Division of Pediatric Infectious Disease.

**Best part of my job:** Getting to meet all the different people in the department and working with them. I like that I can be a resource when they need assistance, whether it's simply showing someone how to send a fax or submitting a complex grant application with multiple sites.

**Unusual memory:** We were celebrating my 40th birthday in Pediatrics. The candles were lit, everyone was singing "Happy Birthday," and then in walks Fire Safety! Apparently the candles on the cake set off the smoke alarm.

**What energizes me at work:** A nice cold Pepsi and, of course, the faculty and staff in the department. The interaction is motivating.

**I'm really good at:** Writing. I'm surprised by my creativity, especially when I'm asked to write something for other people.

**Claim to fame:** I went back to school to set an example for my son to show him the importance of getting an education. I graduated cum laude and I also made the Dean's list. We both graduated from Texas A&M Commerce in 2017.

**Hobby or passion:** My hobbies are reading, going to movies and plays, listening to music and fitness (especially Zumba), weight training, and walking. My passion is ministry. I am involved in several ministries at my church, and I also volunteer monthly to feed the neighborhood and the homeless in my community.



## Tammy Lightfoot, M.P.H, BSN, RN

Clinical Research Manager  
Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center

**First UTSW job:** Study coordinator.

**Best part of my job:** The opportunity to work with people from multifaceted cultural, educational, and social backgrounds.

**Best memory:** My best experience was working with an outstanding group of researchers, coordinators, and clinicians on a 10-year National Institutes of Health-sponsored hypertension clinical trial with African Americans. This trial exposed me to community-based recruitment and I experienced being part of a landmark trial.

**How co-workers describe me:** Kind and willing to help.

**Recipe for success:** The ability to listen. To be a good leader you must have the ability to listen to others and respect their viewpoints. In research, you have your basic scientists, clinical researchers, biostatisticians, study nurses, study coordinators, and many more people working together to achieve research goals. Good research is a collaboration based on a chain of constant communication. For this process to work, you must have the ability to listen and be part of a team!

**What energizes me at work:** Working with people who are excited about their jobs. It motivates me to reassess what I am doing and pushes me to do the best job I can do even when confronted with barriers.

**Claim to fame:** Just being easygoing in hard situations. Keeping a positive attitude.

**Hobby:** Writing.

**Surprising fact:** I am an introvert.

## Shelia Jernigan

Administrative Coordinator  
Hospital Administration

**First UTSW job:** Working as an Administrative Assistant in the Animal Resources Center.

**Best part of my job:** Never knowing what surprises, challenges, and adventures will come with each day.

**Best memory:** Working with the team that oversaw the building of the William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital from start to finish, and being there on opening day to see our first patients admitted!

**How workers describe me:** Resourceful. "If you need information about anything, just ask Shelia. If she doesn't know, she will find out (but she will most likely know)!"

**Recipe for success:** Endurance – having the ability to withstand stress, no matter what the situation is, and move forward to do my best.

**What energizes me at work:** My first cup of coffee!

**I'm really good at:** Cooking (especially Thanksgiving dinner).

**Claim to fame:** My fried chicken!

**Hobby or passion:** Serving as a volunteer and mentor at For Oak Cliff, an organization devoted to encouraging literacy in youth and adults.



## Jenny Gin Liou (Junghigin Liou)

Programmer Analyst IV  
Information Resources Health Development

**First UTSW job:** I started as a Software Specialist III of Managed Care Billing at MSRDP (Medical Service Research & Development Plan).

**Best part of my job:** I always do the research to find a solution for every project. I like facing challenges every day, and I enjoy learning new technologies from my own research and that of my colleagues.

**How co-workers describe me:** A hard worker, never gives up to find a solution, and always makes herself and colleagues happy at work.

**Recipe for success:** Never give up to find solutions to issues in the programs developed by me or other programmers.

**What energizes me at work:** When my customers are very satisfied with my work.

**Hobbies:** Doing yoga, cycling, walking, dancing, swimming, watching movies, and listening to music.

**Final note:** I am glad to have met and worked with many professionals from various departments over the last 25 years.







## Darrel Loveless

Senior Database Analyst  
Orthopaedic Surgery

**First UTSW job:** Database Analyst.

**Unusual memory:** I remember a delivery being made from Dell and someone asked me what it was the delivery guy was holding in the box. I was like, "Oh, it's my mouse." The delivery guy threw the box onto the desk out of fright.

**How co-workers describe me:** Helpful. They always tell me I am willing to help them and never treat them like their questions are silly. I sometimes have to keep a straight face though. Some things have been pretty laughable, but I never call them out on it.

**Recipe for success:** The ability to get along with others. I see our differences and embrace them. We might not always like each other or believe the same things, but as co-workers you have to get along with each other. If not, it makes for very long days.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** The art of "right clicking" – I constantly tell people: "Just right click." It tells you every possible thing you can do at that moment no matter what system you are in.

**Claim to fame:** Getting the Department of Surgery off of DOS (Disk Operating System) in 1994 and becoming the first department at UT Southwestern to have everyone on the network.

**Hobbies:** Family, friends, and volleyball.

**Surprising fact:** I love Hallmark movies!



## Bruce Musgrove

Technical Support Specialist III  
Facilities Management, General Services

**First UTSW job:** Radiation Safety Lab Manager.

**Best part of my job:** The challenges of keeping the wide variety of technological systems in our department running.

**Favorite memory:** Meeting my wife.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dependable. No matter what they need, no matter what the technical challenges are being faced, I will find the solution to keep our systems running.

**Recipe for success:** Perseverance. I don't give up easily when a challenge is presented.

**What energizes me at work:** The appreciation of my co-workers when I resolve issues for them.

**Something I'm really good at:** Listening.

**Hobby or passion:** Hard to say, between reading sci-fi books and maintaining my fish tanks.

**Surprising fact:** I co-administer a mental health support group for submarine veterans on Facebook.



## John Luke

Associate Director, Ambulatory Facilities  
Ambulatory Services Administration

**First UTSW job:** Central Supply Coordinator.

**Best part of my job:** I like being part of the planning team responsible for the construction, renovation, equipment procurement, and fit up of clinical facilities.

**How co-workers describe me:** Dedicated and supportive. During my upbringing, I was encouraged to give my best and to be respectful of others. I've always tried to employ these characteristics throughout my working career.

**Recipe for success:** I've always built relationships on being professional and approachable with people of all backgrounds, occupations, and skill levels. I find that people are more receptive when you treat them with respect and a smile.

**What energizes me at work:** Being in an environment whereby I can effect change. In all of my job positions at UTSW, I have been able to provide input and make decisions that directly contribute to the growth and overall mission of the Health System.

**I'm really good at:** Penmanship.

**Hobby or passion:** I'm a 19-year member of the Health Care Ministry at Friendship-West Baptist Church whose mission is to provide basic health screenings and health education to the congregation and local community in South Dallas.

**Surprising fact:** I've been a collector of R&B and jazz music since high school (45 rpm, vinyl albums, cassettes, CDs).



## Sijing Niu

Senior Research Scientist  
Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development, Next Generation Sequencing Core

**First UTSW job:** Research Technician II in the Human Nutrition Center.

**Best part of my job:** The cooperation among my work team.

**How co-workers describe me:** Funny, friendly, and nice to people.

**Recipe for success:** I'm persistent and work hard.

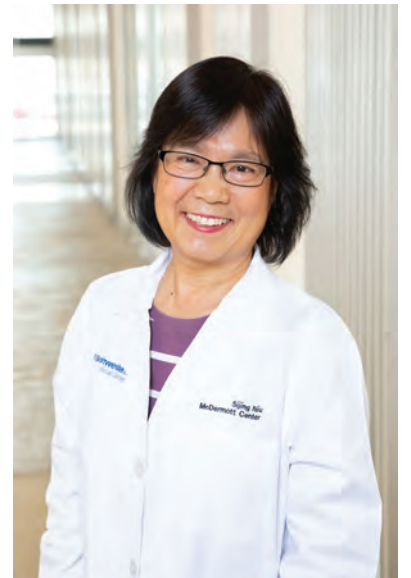
**What energizes me at work:** Trying to get better results.

**I'm really good at:** Cooking, especially fish.

**Claim to fame:** A good memory.

**Hobby or passion:** Travel and Taiji.

**Surprising fact:** I like to climb mountains.



## Linda Millen

Senior Research Associate/Lab Manager  
Physiology, Thomas Lab

**First UTSW job:** In 1993 I moved from the cold, frigid Canadian homeland to the warm, welcoming Dallas scene, accepting a Lab Technician position in January 1994 at UTSW with a new faculty member, Dr. Philip Thomas (Professor of Physiology). This work environment was so pleasing that even as my life directions changed, I couldn't bear to return to the bone chilling north ... so I set my roots.

**Best part of my job:** Being in research, I love the job flexibility, nonredundancy, and constant challenge.

**How co-workers describe me:** Rather than presume, I asked: "She is a strong, transparent communicator and very collaborative," they said.

**What energizes me at work:** I like my job! It's a good work atmosphere with good people. Over the years, the lab provided a rotating supply of new students and employees. It's been fun getting to know them and watching them grow and succeed. I credit this great work setting to Dr. Thomas, my friend and boss over all these years.

**Hobbies and passions:** My family, camping, hiking, backpacking, kayaking – wherever it takes us, we will be there together. It's wonderful to watch the kids discover there is more to life than electronics.

**Surprising fact:** Together with my loving husband and three children, we are a Boy Scout family – yes, even my daughter.



## Cary Orrick

Performance Improvement Coordinator  
Nursing Administration Support

**First UTSW job:** Nurse on 6 South Telemetry at the former St. Paul University Hospital.

**Best part of the job:** Working with the specialists who are in very different roles from me. It has been a wonderful opportunity.

**Unusual memory:** I worked 20-plus years in the Emergency Department at St. Paul. Watching the lights go out on the sign above the ED was surreal. That "new beginnings" feeling coupled with sadness struck me. As I turned toward I-35, I could not see the end of the line of ambulances coming to move our patients to William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

**How co-workers describe me:** Talks too much.

**What energizes me at work:** Engagement; when people I interact with want to be where they are, doing what they are doing.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Storytelling. Everyone loves a good story.

**I'm really good at:** Working with my hands. I love to fix almost anything that is broken.

**Hobby or passion:** Cycling.







## Orlando Salazar

Assistant Director Building Maintenance  
Building Maintenance Administration

**First UTSW job:** I started in 1994 as a Physical Plant Maintenance Worker.

**Best part of my job:** I really enjoy working with passionate people who, like me, want to make a difference.

**Unusual memory:** I was part of the design and installation of the koi pond at K courtyard. It's been great to see so many people enjoy it over the years.

**How co-workers describe me:** A team player who is always willing to help get the job done.

**Recipe for success:** I am a people person. I am outgoing and enjoy being around others. I am good at talking through situations and can turn others around with my powers of persuasion.

**What energizes me at work:** Challenges – I see them as opportunities to rise to the occasion.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Along with my competitiveness, I have an addiction to speed! In my younger days I did some amateur racing. So I would be a jet pilot! Just for the speed!

**Surprising fact:** I am super competitive. Whether it's checkers, ax throwing, or skipping rocks, I always want to win. I once participated in a contest to see who could stay awake the longest. I went without sleep for seven days and won a new truck!

**Final note:** I feel I am a product of this institution's commitment to its employees. I have received mentoring, training, and – more importantly – opportunity! I truly feel I am a part of something great here.



## Becky Sheldon

Administrative Coordinator  
Urology

**First UTSW job:** Working as an Administrative Assistant in Dermatology-Mohs Surgery.

**Best part of the job:** The variety of tasks I get to perform and working with others in different departments. I've met a lot of great people and made lifetime friends.

**How co-workers describe me:** The “go-to” person. Having been here so long, I know how to get things done or whom I can contact to direct me on how to get something done.

**Recipe for success:** I'm organized, efficient, and able to multitask, which is something you have to be able to do in a place this big.

**Hobby or passion:** I enjoy being outdoors and watching football, baseball, golf, and tennis. I also take a NASCAR trip every year.

**Final note:** I've seen UT Southwestern grow a lot over the past 25 years and it's been exciting and scary at the same time. We truly are the future of medicine today.



## Dolores Santoyo

Clinical Research Manager  
Allergy and Immunology Division, Internal Medicine

**First UTSW job:** Research Assistant.

**Best part of my job:** I work with an awesome team! We all support each other doing a job we enjoy.

**Claim to fame:** *Parade* magazine featured my siblings and I all attending college while my dad supported us on a waiter salary. I described my professional interest to work with families and children with chronic illness because coming from a family of eight, I knew how families worked – what affects one affects the whole family unit. A Quarter Century colleague saw this article and set out to find me to join a newly funded study dealing with pediatric asthma. I began working part time as a Research Assistant. The rest is history.

**Hobbies:** Anything that involves the outdoors, gardening, bird watching, traveling, going for walks, and practicing yoga. I love spending time with my family, grandsons William and Jacob, my dad who is 91, and my mom who is 86!

**Surprising fact:** UTSW is the only place I have worked since I graduated from college.

**Final note:** I am an alumna of the former School of Allied Health (1993), my daughter Jessica Bennett is a Registered Nurse for the float pool at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, and my grandsons were born at Clements University Hospital.



## Jacqueline Stokes

Physician Communications  
Coordinator II  
Health System Information  
Resources Centralized  
Telecommunications Services (CTCS)



## Glynis Taylor

Lab Technical Assistant II  
Internal Medicine – Cardiology

## Angela Sheffield

Billing Specialist III  
Medical Group Revenue Cycle

**First UTSW job:** Working as a temp employee in the Dermatology Clinic.

**Unusual memory:** I can recall the old patient registration/check-in process: Asking the patient for their Blue UTSW registration card, stamping all registration paperwork on the embosser machine, then requesting and waiting for medical records to bring the patient chart before the patient could be seen. Also, the countless hours spent on hold with the insurance company just to obtain basic coverage information. Thank goodness for technology!

**How co-workers describe me:** As a team player, because of my willingness to help out.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Playing the piano, because it seems to be relaxing and entertaining at the same time.

**Hobby or passion:** I enjoy bike riding, walking on nature trails, working out, reading, and traveling.

**Surprising fact:** I like writing poetry, and I have a twin sister.

## Douglas Studebaker

Special Procedures Technologist  
Angiography

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Radiology Technologist.

**Best part of my job:** The advancing technologies and procedures in angiography.

**Best memory:** The day-to-day experiences I have with my co-workers, telling jokes or talking about their life.

**How co-workers describe me:** Reliable. I always make sure we have what we need for procedures. Grumpy in a fun way, I hope.

**Recipe for success:** Dependability and persistence. I will stay on it until I get it done.

**What energizes me at work:** I feel my job is needed, helping with the care of patients.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Speaking Spanish. I would love to be bilingual.

**I am really good at:** Navigation. I can find a way to anywhere.

**Hobby or passion:** I like to do yardwork and plant a vegetable garden every year. I love spending time with my husband, Terry, traveling and eating at new restaurants.

**Surprising fact:** I was in the military and went to many countries. At that time, I was doing secret operations.







## Bill Tharpe, Pharm.D.

Clinical Pharmacy Manager  
Pharmacy

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Pharmacist.

**Best part of my job:** My co-workers.

**Unusual memory:** During the H1N1 pandemic flu outbreak, I had approximately \$250,000 of Tamiflu and Relenza stored in my office.

**What energizes me at work:** The patients.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Nature photography. I have visited Kenya and Tanzania. Watching the animals in their natural habitat was unbelievable. I am a fairly good photographer, but could not make a living at it.

**Hobby or passion:** Golf, running, and photography.

**Surprising fact:** While in pharmacy school, I worked as a bartender in Underground Atlanta. Also, I worked in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for eight years.

**Final note:** After living in Saudi Arabia, my wife and I wanted to repatriate to the Arizona desert. When the opportunity to move to Dallas became available, we thought we'd stay two years here, then move to Arizona. In the 26 years since then, we have not thought about moving to Phoenix.



## Lisa Timson

Manager, Information Resources  
Health System Information Resources

**First UTSW job:** Working as an Ambulatory Clinic Registered Nurse in the Department of Neurological Surgery.

**Best part of my job:** My colleagues – they are my family away from home. They are caring, funny, and hard workers.

**How co-workers describe me:** Generous. I've been told that I am giving of my time and experience.

**Recipe for success:** Tenacity. If there is something my team needs, I won't give up until I have a solution.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Cooking and baking.

**I'm really good at:** Planning parties and vacations. I like to research where we are going and make dinner reservations ahead of time. I also like to find great hotels with the best locations.

**Hobby or passion:** Running and travel. My goal is to run eight half-marathons in eight days on eight continents.

**Surprising fact:** I have completed a half-marathon in every state. I am working toward completing 100 half marathons.



## Rosamma Thomas

Registered Nurse  
William P. Clements Jr. University  
Hospital-Day Surgery

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Patient Care Technician.

**Best part of my job:** I enjoy working with a great team of physicians, co-workers, and supervisors.

**How co-workers describe me:** Friendly, encouraging, hardworking, and dedicated.

**Recipe for success:** Being caring and empathetic toward others. I always put myself in others' shoes.

**I'm really good at:** Making sure to give my patients the best possible care. They are a priority in everything that I do. It's important to me that they are happy.

**Claim to fame:** My greatest accomplishment is working 25 years at UT Southwestern. I am proud to be a part of this great institution.

**Hobby or passion:** I enjoy traveling and spending time with my family and friends.

**Surprising fact:** The old St. Paul University Hospital had a unit on the 9th floor and I worked there for five years. Many people don't know that St. Paul had an inpatient unit on the 9th floor, since that unit was closed in 1999.



## Robin Underwood-Wardle

Billing Specialist III  
Medical Group Revenue Cycle

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Phlebotomist. I also got the specimens ready for the techs and for outside pickup.

**Best part of my job:** I get to work from home and in my pajamas. I also work with a great group of people.

**Best memory:** When I worked in chemotherapy at the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, I enjoyed getting to know all the patients. I just loved them.

**How co-workers describe me:** As a team player, always helping others. Nice, polite, and funny. I like to make them laugh.

**What energizes me at work:** Getting my work done on time.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Teaching, so I can help my grandson with his homework.

**Hobby or passion:** I like working in the yard, and camping, fishing, and swimming when I can.

**Claim to fame:** Raising my grandson, spending time with family and friends.

**Surprising fact:** I like to cook and bake – especially around the holidays. I love football.



## Annette Thompson

Medical Technologist  
Office of Pathology, Department of  
Microbiology

**First UTSW job:** Working as a Medical Technologist. This is the only job I have ever had at UTSW.

**Best memory:** At the former St. Paul University Hospital during Mardi Gras, the late Dr. Gary Howard Burgess would pass out those colorful beads to everyone in the lab.

**Best part of my job:** Helping physicians and patients by providing good-quality results.

**How co-workers describe me:** Quiet and always helpful.

**Recipe for success:** Being conscientious, open-minded, and willing to accept changes.

**What energizes me at work:** It never gets boring. The world of microbiology is constantly changing.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Playing the flute. It has such a beautiful sound.

**Hobby or passion:** Reading and watching sports such as baseball, football, basketball, and tennis.



## Andre Wilson

Facilities Building Services Coordinator  
Facilities Management

**First UTSW job:** Working as a night watch Maintenance employee.

**Best part of my job:** I like working with my hands to repair or create things.

**Funniest memory:** Thinking that I had to work on certain holidays that were a given.

**How co-workers describe me:** A team player. I like to help others get the job done.

**Recipe for success:** Being a go-getter when the opportunity arises.

**What energizes me at work:** Working with people as a team.

**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Being a computer technician, because there's a great demand for it to help computer users.

**I'm really good at:** Listening to the concerns of others.

**Claim to fame:** I take pride in being a good husband, and a good dad to my two wonderful daughters.

**Hobby or passion:** I like to play tennis and volleyball.

**Surprising fact:** I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of the living God.

**Final note:** I am proud to be a UT Southwestern employee of 25 years.





# Program teaches medical students how to advance patient care

By Nyshicka Jordan

As a primary care physician, second-year internal medicine resident Dr. Taylor Roberts became aware of a problem some of her patients encountered. Upon hospital discharge, they received multiple sets of medication lists with discrepancies.

Routinely, a patient's chart contains several documents that detail their prescribed medications, including the discharge summary, clinician instructions, and a computer-generated medication list.

"These three major lists can be discrepant with each other – and that can lead to patients having misunderstandings about what medications they should take or a clinician misunderstanding what the patient took," said Dr. Roberts.

This led Dr. Roberts and other residents to develop a quality improvement project on this issue for practices at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital and Parkland Memorial Hospital. The solution: Simplify the medication information provided at discharge by deactivating older, outdated medication lists.

Dr. Roberts learned how to tackle patient care improvement projects as a medical student at UT Southwestern through the M.D. with Distinction in Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (MDD) program. It's one of five Distinction tracks available for medical students to earn with their degree at UTSW.

"We're all responsible for improving patient care," Dr. Roberts said. "Broadly, the goal of quality improvement in medicine is to improve the way physicians deliver care to patients so that every patient receives the best care possible every time, and that we as medical providers are doing everything in our power to ensure patients are safe."

## In-depth training

The MDD in Quality Improvement and Patient Safety track provides medical students with 24 additional weeks of extensive quality improvement training. Besides improving care and clinic and hospital policies, another goal is to pique students' interest in careers focused on quality improvement.

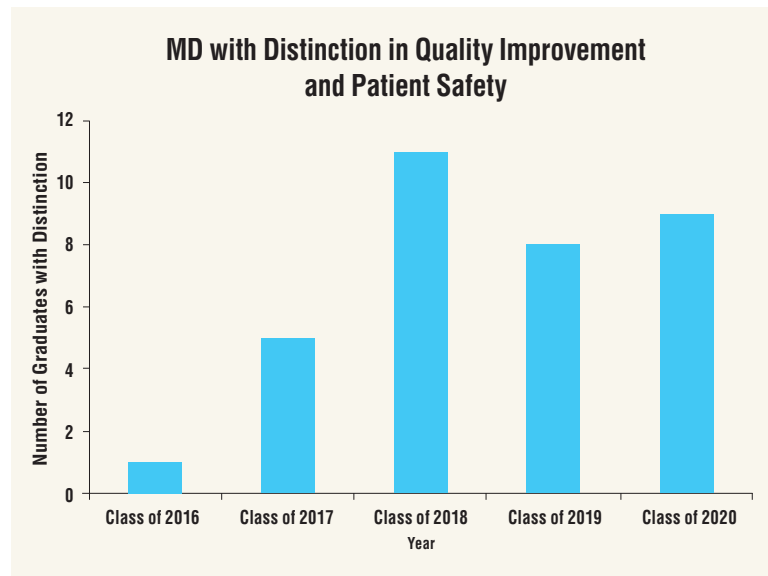
"Every school teaches medical students the basic methodologies of how to improve factors such as infection rates, patient satisfaction, or how to decrease care costs," said Dr. Gary Reed, Associate Dean for Quality, Safety, and Outcomes Education.



Resident Dr. Taylor Roberts presented her student quality improvement project at the Texas Medical Association TEXMED conference in 2018.



Dr. Aishwarya Vishwanath, a 2020 Medical School graduate, earned the MDD Distinction in May.



"UT Southwestern also teaches all of our medical students the basics of quality improvement, plus we wanted to provide interested students an in-depth QI experience with academic recognition."

Since the start of the track in 2015, 34 UTSW medical students have graduated with this Distinction. An additional 20 students are in the pipeline to graduate with this Distinction in 2021 and 2022.

The curriculum includes a week-long Quality Improvement boot camp centered on interdisciplinary training at which students work with nursing and industrial engineering students from UT Arlington. Students are assigned to groups of up to six and tasked with solving clinical quality problems in an interprofessional setting.

"Although doctors are frequently medical team leaders, physicians

should learn to use the strengths of all the members of their team to solve medical problems because the collective knowledge of a team of a doctor, nurse, and engineer is stronger than a team of three doctors," Dr. Reed said.

Additionally, students complete a seven-week summer program that pairs them with clinical faculty members working on QI projects.

## Applying QI skills

As a student, Dr. Roberts worked under Dr. Jennifer Rabaglia, Associate Chief Medical Officer and Chief Quality and Safety Officer for Parkland, on a QI project to enhance recovery of elective colorectal surgery patients. The goal was to standardize evidence-based best practices in care before, during, and after the operation to decrease complication rates and hospitalization time.

The project was presented at several

conferences and Dr. Roberts' first-author paper, "Enhanced Recovery Pathway Improves Colorectal Surgery Outcomes in Private and Safety-Net Settings," was published in the *Journal of Surgical Research* in 2019.

"I think the QI track does an amazing job in teaching fundamental methodology skills that enable you to take a leadership role in whatever project you decide to work on," Dr. Roberts said.

For her more recent project to address discrepancies in medication lists, Dr. Roberts and other residents reviewed hundreds of patient records.

The residents found that 21 percent of Parkland's discharge summaries had discrepancies in them, as well as 12 percent of the discharge instructions. Similarly, at Clements University Hospital, the results revealed that 17 percent of discharge summaries and 8 percent of discharge instructions contained discrepancies.

"It's actually a pretty prevalent problem," Dr. Roberts said, adding that discrepancies in medication lists is a hospital issue not unique to Parkland or Clements.

Residents presented their findings to the committees that oversee electronic medical functions at the two hospitals. The solution was to deactivate Smartlinks, the electronic functions that autopopulate a list of medications into the discharge instructions. Residents discovered that these lists were not getting updated appropriately, in part leading to discrepancies between discharge documents.

## Showing your work

Physicians in every specialty are required to participate in QI projects during residency as part of a require-

ment by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, therefore the MDD track sets students up for success in many ways after medical school. Dr. Aishwarya Vishwanath, a 2020 Medical School graduate, earned the MDD Distinction in May. In July, she began her internal medicine residency at Rhode Island Hospital – Brown University.

As a student, she was assigned to a QI project called "Using Audit and Feedback to Reduce Avoidable Transfusions in Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery" under the direction of Dr. Philip Greulich, Professor of Anesthesiology and Pain Management. The project aimed to better inform physicians about the transfusion process and reduce the need for the procedure during cardiac surgery.

In March, she presented the project as her thesis. All Distinction-seeking students are required to write a 30-page thesis and give an oral presentation, publish at least one peer-reviewed abstract or article, and present their project at a regional or national conference.

"The skills I learned in medical school through this program definitely give me a leg up going forward in my career," Dr. Vishwanath said. "That includes learning how to work with different medical specialties and multidisciplinary teams, such as nursing staff, data analysts, and information technology."

Dr. Reed holds the S.T. Harris Family Distinguished Chair in Internal Medicine, in Honor of Gary Reed, M.D., and the Eva A. Rosenthal Professorship in Internal Medicine, in Honor of Gary Reed, M.D.

## Study Continued from page 1

is most exposed and how the virus is spreading will help policymakers as well as civic and business leaders to formulate effective mitigation and containment strategies and highlight where we have opportunities to improve the health of local communities through equitable public health strategies. We are deeply grateful to all community members and supporters who have committed to help us advance this critical research."

The DFW COVID-19 Prevalence Study aims to enroll approximately 45,000 Dallas and Tarrant county residents from across the entire spectrum of diversity in our community, as well as occupations at higher risk for exposure such as grocery store and airline employees. The range of socioeconomic status as well as diverse racial and ethnic communities will be surveyed and tested for active COVID-19 infection and evidence of past infection, then followed over time to provide insights into how individuals' immune responses evolve and how hot spots emerge in the community.

UT Southwestern will collaborate with Texas Health Resources, the health system that cares for more patients than any other provider in North Texas, to set up testing sites across both counties.

"We want to learn more about the disease in every way we can, and the best way to do that is by harnessing the power of our two organizations," said Barclay Berdan, CEO of Texas Health. "Together, we can conduct scientifically strong research and use the information generated to help with the prevention and treatment of this



Dr. Jasmin Tiro



Dr. Amit Singal



Dr. Andrew Masica

disease here in DFW as well as for communities throughout the country."

The study is being supported by funds from both Dallas and Tarrant counties and the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth as well as members of the business and philanthropic communities together with the collaborating organizations – UT Southwestern and Texas Health Resources.

"We need to better understand the exposure of COVID-19 in our local communities so we can better intervene, limit its spread, and save lives," said Dr. Amit Singal, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Population and Data Sciences and Principal Investigator for the study. "Dallas and Tarrant counties are incredibly diverse. We have carefully designed our study to specifically characterize COVID-19 exposure across many of the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups that comprise this region."

The study will recruit equal numbers of participants across Dallas and Tarrant counties' three most common racial/ethnic groups – non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic – to represent the community's diversity and spectrum of COVID-19 related risk factors.

"A major concern about COVID-19 is that the virus impacts certain groups differentially, and that's why we're so committed to this initiative. We want to use insights from the study to help address these disparities and guide actions to promote health across the diverse population we serve," said Dr. Andrew Masica, Chief Medical Officer of Reliable Health for Texas Health and study co-Principal Investigator. "Conducting this type of participatory research across the extended DFW community is fully aligned with the mission of the UTSW-Texas Health collaboration as a regional health network."

A mailed study invitation letter will be sent to randomly selected, 30,000 Dallas and Tarrant county households in selected geographic areas. Separately, the study will examine the prevalence of COVID-19 infection among occupation groups at higher risk of being exposed to the disease. Approximately 14,000 subjects from various industries in both Dallas and Tarrant counties will be included for data collection.

"Time is of the essence given the significant impact that COVID has already had on the U.S. population including our local communities in Dallas and Tarrant counties," said Dr. Jasmin Tiro, a co-investigator and Associate Professor of Population and Data Sciences at UT Southwestern. "We are collaborating with many community organizations and leaders to get the word out about this extremely important study and help encourage invited residents to step up and participate. Our goal is to rapidly recruit all participants in five months."

As recruitment progresses, interim data will be analyzed by the study team; the collaborating institutions will provide updates to area stakeholders and government officials to help guide policy planning.

Dr. Podolsky holds the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.

Dr. Singal holds the David Bruton, Jr. Professorship in Clinical Cancer Research and is a Dedman Family Scholar in Clinical Care.



# CRI graduate student Divya Bezwada receives 2020 Ida M. Green Award

By Katie Regan

Divya Bezwada, a fourth year graduate student in the DeBerardinis lab at Children's Medical Center Research Institute (CRI) at UT Southwestern, has been honored with the 2020 Ida M. Green Award for her research into metabolic changes that influence kidney cancer development.

Presented annually by Southwestern Medical Foundation to a female student in UT Southwestern's Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, this award recognizes the selected student's scientific accomplishments and commitment to the UT Southwestern community.

"Divya has gone above and beyond to establish a feeling of community among graduate students in the CRI and at UT Southwestern," said her mentor, Dr. Ralph DeBerardinis, a Professor at CRI, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Genetics and Metabolism at UTSW, and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator. "She works very hard at the bench, performs the kind of research that spans multiple disciplines, and takes on leadership roles in the Graduate School that help make UT Southwestern such an exceptional place to train."

In the DeBerardinis lab, Ms. Bezwada is leading a collaborative project to study kidney cancer directly in patients alongside an interdisciplinary team of surgeons, physicians, and nurses. She infuses stable isotope-labeled nutrients into patients during their surgery and then takes tumor samples back to the lab and uses cultured cell lines and mouse models to reveal how kidney cancers support their metabolic needs. Discovering the metabolic changes cancerous cells undergo has the potential to provide new therapeutic and diagnostic options for patients.

This work has already led to a co-first



Divya Bezwada

author paper in *Cell Metabolism* with Dr. Kevin Courtney, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine at UT Southwestern. The study revealed that clear cell renal cell carcinoma (ccRCC) tumors metabolize sugar differently than normal kidney tissues do or tumors in the brain and lung. As a result, ccRCC tumors may have metabolic dependencies that make them vulnerable to new types of therapies. ccRCC is the deadliest and most common form of kidney cancer – so identifying new therapies is an important clinical need. Keeping her work patient focused is important for Ms. Bezwada, which is why she sees patients weekly with her clinical mentor, Dr. Vitaly Margulis, Professor of Urology at UT

Southwestern.

"I am honored to receive the Ida M. Green Award. I am very fortunate to be supported by the UT Southwestern and CRI community. The science we do is a huge team effort and would not be possible without strong institutional support," Ms. Bezwada said. "I have also had exceptional mentors throughout my career and I try to pay that mentorship forward whenever I can."

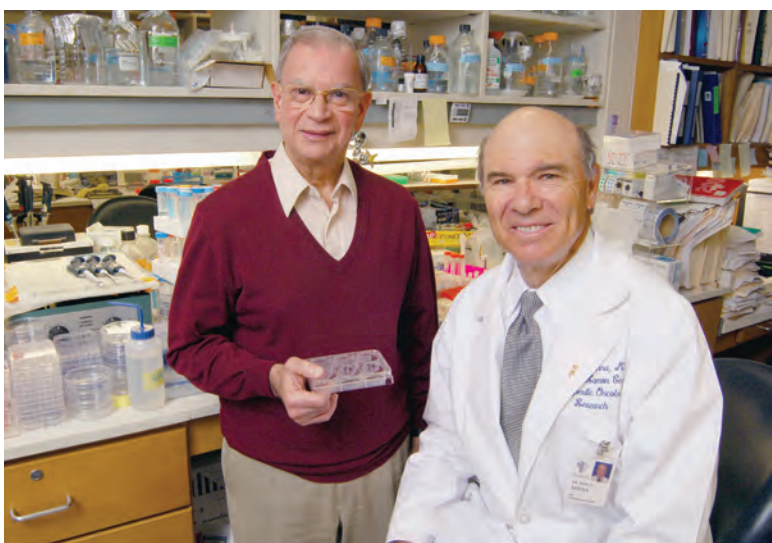
Besides a passion for her research, Ms. Bezwada is dedicated to providing the same mentorship experience she received throughout her career by being active in the graduate school community. Since joining the graduate program in 2016, she

has helped organize multiple programs for student mentoring and leadership, particularly ones for women in science. This includes the Student Emerging Academy of Leaders (SEALS) program, a leadership development program for Mechanisms of Disease and Translational Science (MODTS) and NIH Predoctoral Trainees, and the Women in Science Mentoring Series. Ms. Bezwada is also the inaugural holder of the Kartik Rajagopalan Award, which recognizes trainees who best cultivate an atmosphere of collegiality and support at CRI.

A native of Virginia, Ms. Bezwada received her undergraduate degrees in biology and chemistry from the University of Virginia and a master's degree in biotechnology from Johns Hopkins University. She enrolled in the Graduate School at UT Southwestern in 2016 and joined CRI shortly after. Currently, Ms. Bezwada is working toward a Ph.D. in cancer biology and is in the MODTS program, an honors graduate track designed to train Ph.D. students to become leaders of the next generation of translational scientists. She is also a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Predoctoral Fellow.

"It is a great honor for Southwestern Medical Foundation to present this year's Ida Green Award to Ms. Bezwada," said Kathleen M. Gibson, President and CEO of Southwestern Medical Foundation. "The depth of her leadership, research, and academic accomplishment is inspiring and representative of the pioneering spirit of innovation that Cecil and Ida Green represent."

Dr. DeBerardinis holds the Joel B. Steinberg, M.D. Chair in Pediatrics and is a Sowell Family Scholar in Medical Research at UTSW. He is the Robert L. Moody, Sr. Faculty Scholar at the CRI.



Dr. John Minna, right, and his longtime research partner, the late Dr. Adi Gazdar

## Research Continued from page 1

collectively resulted in 2.9 million citations. They are also cited in 4,700 patents.

"I knew there was an impact, but had no idea how large it was – the numbers even surprised me," said Dr. Minna.

In addition, the published work has been linked to 422 clinical trials of potential anti-cancer therapies and to advances in drug development. All of this originated from patients treated at NIH and military hospitals who consented to have their tumors biopsied and studied to advance medical research.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recently announced that the cancer death rate fell 29 percent from 1991 to 2017 and took its sharpest annual drop – 2.2 percent – between 2016 and 2017. The ACS credited much of that decline to improved prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of lung cancer.

### Creating a cell line from scratch

After training in biochemical genetics at the NIH, Dr. Minna completed a fellowship at the

National Cancer Institute (NCI). Lung cancer deaths in the 1970s were high, leading to intense research focus in this area.

"No one at that time had a panel of lung cancer lines to study in the laboratory, so we knew we had to create one," said Dr. Minna, now Director of UTSW's Hamon Center for Therapeutic Oncology Research and Professor of Internal Medicine and Pharmacology at UT Southwestern.

From 1975 to 1981, Dr. Minna worked at the NCI-Veterans Administration Medical Oncology Branch at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center and then moved in 1981 to the NCI-Navy Medical Oncology Branch at the National Naval Medical Center (now the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center) in Bethesda, Maryland. Ten years later, he joined UT Southwestern.

"When I went to lead the NCI-VA Medical Oncology Branch, my first recruitment effort was to convince Adi to come along with me to run the laboratory program there. Since so many cancer patients at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center had

lung cancer, I knew we needed to make that our focus. The NCI then moved us to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda and we continued this work. Adi was a great cell biologist. We combined my genetics with his cell biology for our lung cancer studies throughout our long partnership," Dr. Minna said.

Dr. Gazdar, who died in 2018, was hailed as a cell line pioneer who improved the outcomes for countless patients. Dr. Gazdar was a Professor of Pathology and an investigator in the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center. He held the W. Ray Wallace Distinguished Chair in Molecular Oncology Research.

The two first met at the NIH, where Dr. Gazdar had been studying cancer viruses.

"We began our partnership by studying the somatic cell genetics of retroviruses to identify genes responsible for viral receptors and replication in human and mouse cells," Dr. Minna said.

Dr. Gazdar's collection included the first human tumor line producing a human retrovirus, later called HTLV-1, based on a sample from a lymphoma patient the NCI-VA team had treated in 1978. Dr. Gazdar also developed the key T-cell line from another lymphoma patient that was

used in the isolation of the HIV/AIDS virus.

### Research expands with SPORE grant

At UTSW, the duo joined forces with a team from UT MD Anderson Cancer Center led by Dr. Jack Roth and secured an NCI Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) grant in lung cancer. That provided the opportunity to collaborate with other SPORE programs and lung cancer investigators worldwide.

Early in their partnership, the biggest obstacles to their research turned out to be cultural and not scientific, Dr. Minna said.

"People would ask us, 'Why are you studying lung cancer? Everyone is going to die anyway.' Or, 'Why do you want to use genetics to study lung cancer? It is not an inherited disease,'" Dr. Minna recalled.

"Of course, in retrospect these considerations all seem stupid, but they were very real at the time, and, thankfully, Adi Gazdar and I believed in each other and kept working on the problem. Thanks also to the dozens of pathologists, surgeons, oncologists, pulmonary physicians, research nurses, patient advocates, and other team members, many of whom are mentioned in the recent *Journal of Cellular Biochemistry*

article," he said.

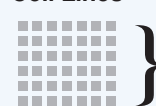
In recent years, the tumor cell line database has expanded to include breast, ovarian, colon, and rare tumor cell lines as well as a large panel of immortalized lung epithelial cell lines. Those resources continue to be distributed on a worldwide basis for research that includes creating mouse models to evaluate new immunotherapeutics, such as checkpoint blockade agents, or to study strategies for overcoming drug resistance.

Dr. Minna has received cell line licensing royalties from the NCI and from UTSW. Dr. Roth lists being a consultant and stock owner (including pending patents) in Genprex Inc.

"We have also distributed the UTSW cell lines to thousands of investigators around the world," Dr. Minna said. "The biggest thanks should go to the people dying of lung cancer decades ago who took action that greatly improved the outlook for future generations."

Dr. Minna holds the Max L. Thomas Distinguished Chair in Molecular Pulmonary Oncology and the Sarah M. and Charles E. Seay Distinguished Chair in Cancer Research.

### Cell Lines



33,207 Publications

4,700 Citing Patents

1,232,329 Citations

422 Linked Clinical Trials

1,019 Supporting Funders

JOURNAL OF CELLULAR BIOCHEMISTRY

The illustration shows the magnitude of Drs. Minna and Gazdar's work in the scientific community.