As we enter a new phase for USC Genetic Counseling, we are expanding our education activities beyond the genetic counseling classroom. As genetic counselors and faculty, we all educate our patients and our students continually. We are reaching new audiences and teaching not just the basic principles of genetics, but also the Hot Topics of current genetic progress. Peggy Walker was one of four School of Medicine Faculty members who taught in the annual four-session Mini-Med School last fall, reaching about 80 members of the Columbia community with various genetic topics and counselor perspectives, from basic genetic principles to DTC genomics. The young-at-heart mostly elderly “class” seemed especially interested in multifactorial inheritance of diseases they know and have personally experienced, and in the concepts of personalized medicine and pharmacogenomics.

Janice Edwards is currently teaching human and medical genetics to the 95 first-year medical students during Spring Semester. She brings the practical side of the principles of genetics, clinical correlates, and topics fresh from news sources when a Hot Topic like prenatal microarrays arises from clinical trials reported at the MFM annual meeting.

See Extending Education p. 2
She is coaching the students to search online for more information and to find new sites of credible genetic information for their future patients. She collaborates with Dr. Shekhar Patel to ensure that our next generation of physicians receives a basic foundation of genetic education and the online tools that will enable them to keep up with the rapid pace of change in our field.

Peggy Walker is teaching an elective course in Human and Medical Genetics to a Graduate level class of biomedical students. Five doctoral candidates from clinical psychology, experimental psychology and exercise physiology are engaged with Peggy in a challenging romp through Thompson & Thompson. We supplement the basic principles of genetics with current journal literature and recent review articles on topics including epigenetics, CNV and SNP microarrays, Next Gen Sequencing, and the genetics of Parkinson’s disease. Each student has chosen a specific disease condition to prepare and present a Case Study that is required to reflect many of the general principles that they are learning for the first time in this class. And yes, they are learning how to draw and analyze pedigrees, calculate risk, and use the Hardy-Weinberg Law for population genetics. Selected topics are covered by our adjunct faculty members, including Vicki Vincent, Andrea Sellers, Karen Brooks, and Dr. Lydia Matesic, Assistant Professor of Biology at USC. We hope to double the size of the class next year as word spreads that we are offering a unique view of human genetics that is not available elsewhere at USC.

Preparations are underway for our annual distance-learning class, Medical Genetics for Health Professionals, targeted for doctoral and master’s nursing candidates. Initiated in 2001, this class has evolved from the traditional classroom to entirely online. The USC School of Nursing found it so valuable for their doctoral candidates, they rewrote the degree requirements to also include it for their masters students. Over the next few years, the online student population is expected to climb to over 50! All five of us will be involved in teaching and facilitating group sessions through distance education.

And just to keep us on our toes, we are in our third year of offering a Summer Internship to a college student with interest in genetic counseling. We are currently reviewing applications and will host one student for six weeks, with the opportunity for her/him to learn from the inside-out about what genetic counselors do on a daily basis. Our two former interns were exceptional students and both have accepted interviews for the upcoming USC Genetic Counseling Program Class of 2014.

As we ramp up our outreach activities, we are providing educational opportunities for a wide variety of students across South Carolina and the nation, and are also sharpening our current knowledge, digging deeper into new areas of genetics, and using topics that we teach other students to ensure that our own students in the Program benefit from our knowledge of current genetic topics. We must learn in order to teach, and we teach in order to learn. We are stretching, we are growing, we are getting the message out that genetics is important for everyone’s future healthcare!
An amazing year to reflect on and an amazing year ahead! USC Genetics has evolved yet again with Dr. Best’s moving on to a career in administration. In December, we recognized our Genetics Laboratory with its distinguished 35 year history and celebrated our technologists who have served the community so well for so long. As the laboratory closed its doors, USC Genetic Counseling continued its metamorphosis.

You’ll find us in newly renovated space which we designed and decorated. New paint, carpet, desks, phones, computers...it’s so nice to have everything fresh and new. Everyone who sees our suite seems to like our new home. While it’s cozy in size...the best part is we have windows again!!! Come see us anytime...we’re right next to the deli 😊

Change hasn’t slowed us down by any stretch......we are now “genetic education central” for the University...teaching genetic counselor graduate students, first year medical students, nursing doctoral and masters candidates, and biomedical science candidates in several full semester courses. These, of course, are in addition to the special lectures to health professional and community groups given by our faculty and graduate students throughout the year.

Our graduates continue to shine.....look for the Editor’s Choice article in the February issue of Prenatal Diagnosis. Congratulations to Jaime Natoli (2011) whose work is featured! Several other 2011 graduates presented their work at the San Diego NSGC...Emily Rosebrough, Lindsay Langford, Courtney Downtain, and Madison Foster.

We are in the midst of selecting the Class of 2014 and love the energy and enthusiasm that comes from meeting future colleagues and telling them about USC Genetic Counseling. In reflecting on now more than 25 years (!) educating genetic counselors, we recognize our work with the Program is a true privilege...to work with so many bright and accomplished students. We delight as we watch their careers blossom!

As we’ve always said, our alumni make us proud! Please stay in touch ... we love to hear from you throughout the year.

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**Alumni SPOTLIGHT**

**Justine Coppinger (1995)** has put her feet in the sand on both coasts and many states in between! Born in Texas, Justine attended undergrad in Ohio prior to moving to South Carolina for her Master’s in Genetic Counseling. Since, she has held clinical genetic counseling positions in Utah and California before accepting a laboratory counseling position at Signature Genomics in Washington state. While she enjoyed clinical genetic counseling, Justine says “I love data and have always been drawn to technology.”

Six years ago, co-founder of Signature Genomics, Dr. Lisa Shaffer, called Justine and asked her to interview for a genetic counselor position. Although Justine “did not understand the idea of microarray and testing for what seemed to be hundreds of random things,” she obliged. “It wasn’t your typical interview”, says Justine. “I asked them hard questions like ‘why is your technology better?’, ‘what is your hope for the technology?’ etc...” Interestingly enough, “half way through the interview I realized I was the one that did not understand and was hoping for the job!”

Justine was in fact hired, and continues to enjoy Signature Genomics. “I love being on the cutting edge of technologies with remarkable diagnostic potential.” Along with the promise of technology, however, come the business and logistical aspects of a lab. “We work really hard behind the scenes. Genetic counselors are valued in this setting ...we have such a unique skill set that can be used in a variety of ways.”

While Justine admits to working 60+ hour weeks when she first began at Signature, she has strived to find a life/work balance more recently. Justine says her eight year old daughter and five year old son are her priority. “If I was younger and had more sanity I’d have ten of them! They are so much fun!”

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**Director’s Note**

Best wishes to all, Janice

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Genetic counselors inspired to do more

Don’t take our word for it...read what our 2011 Distinguished Alumnae, MaryAnn Whalen Campion, wrote in her own words, in her handwriting!

Wilson Honored with New Leader Award NSGC

Kate Wilson, MS (2007), has been honored by the National Society of Genetic Counselors with the New Leader Award. We are extremely proud of her accomplishments. Here is a snapshot of Kate’s background as a rising star in genetic counseling:

Excerpt from the awards presentation: “After receiving her BS in Zoology at North Carolina State University, Kate Wilson continued her education at University of South Carolina where she received her MS in Genetic Counseling. Following graduation, Kate accepted a position in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the University of Texas-Houston Medical School, where she is a genetic counselor and faculty member in the Genetic Counseling Graduate Program. As such, she provides clinical supervision of the UT Genetic Counseling Program students as well as facilitating the prenatal rotation, lecturing, and serving on Thesis committees. She is primarily a prenatal genetic counselor, but identified a need for cancer genetic counseling in her geographic area and created her own cancer clinics to fill this need. In addition, she created a support group for patients who terminated a pregnancy due to a prenatal diagnosis.

Kate has also been very involved in the Texas Society of Genetic Counselors. She has served on the Needs Assessment Committee, followed by a two year term as vice president and now on the legislative affairs committee. Kate has been actively involved in NSGC since her first year as a genetic counseling student. As the Prenatal SIG Co-chair, Kate was the primary author on a practice guideline for NSGC entitled “Practice Guidelines for Prenatal Screening and Diagnostic Testing Options for Chromosome Aneuploidy: Recommendations of the National Society of Genetic Counselors”. During her short years as a genetic counselor, Kate’s passion has allowed her to make lasting contributions to her patients, her students, and her to us—her colleagues.

Dear Janice, Andrea, Bob, Karen, Vicky, Richard, Peggy: everyone else who has worked tirelessly to make USC such a fantastic training program...

I wanted to take a moment to let you know how incredibly honored I am to receive your distinguished alumni award this year. It arrived yesterday; I immediately hung it on my wall with great pride. I am forever grateful for the knowledge, passion, and adventure that was bestowed upon me during graduate school. Clearly, it was your leadership, friendship, and dedication that inspired me to leap into the exciting world of education. When you leave the office after an exhausting day, I hope that you will remember what an impact you are making on your students... past, present, and future. USC: our GC faculty will always have a special place in my heart.

Warmest regards,
MaryAnn W. Campion

Kate Wilson pictured with husband, Jeff Wilson.

Kate Wilson pictured with husband, Jeff Wilson.
David Everman, MD, Associate Clinical Geneticist in the Greenville office of the Greenwood Genetic Center (GGC), has been appointed as the Medical Director of the Genetic Counseling Program at the University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine. Everman has also been appointed to the School of Medicine faculty as Clinical Assistant Professor.

Everman’s role as Medical Director will include providing advice and recommendations in planning for the dynamic curriculum required to educate genetic counselors. He will also provide ongoing guidance for medical aspects of the curriculum. “We are so pleased to have his input as an advisor to the Program,” said Janice Edwards, MS, CGC, Director of the Genetic Counseling Program at USC. “We consider Dr. Everman the quintessential geneticist: thoughtful, thorough and caring with each family he encounters, and an excellent teacher for genetic counselors in the classroom and the clinic.”

Everman joined the Greenwood Genetic Center in 2000 and performs diagnostic evaluations and cares for individuals with known or suspected genetic conditions in the GGC Greenville office. He is also involved in clinical and basic science research on the genetic basis of limb malformations, and in the supervision and education of medical genetics residents, pediatric residents, genetic counseling students and medical students. Welcome to the Program, Dr. Everman!

Greenwood Genetic Center’s Dr. David Everman Appointed Medical Director for Genetic Counseling Program

Distinguished Master’s in Genetic Counseling Award 2012

Kerry Crandall, MS, CGC, class of ’88, is a genetic counselor at the Fullerton Genetics Center at Mission Hospital in Asheville, N.C. Prior to joining Mission Hospital in 1993, she worked as a public health genetic counselor for the State of Delaware and State of North Carolina. She is credited with implementing the heredity cancer counseling program and helping establish the maternal serum screening program at Mission Hospital. In the past decade, she has coordinated multiple clinical research trials for lysosomal storage diseases. She also participates as a member of the Ethics Committee at Mission Hospital.

Take note as to why Kerry was selected. She is clearly an amazing genetic counselor and person. Here are three (3) quotes from Kerry’s nomination:

“In this age of genetic specialization, she is one of the few remaining genetic counselors who can and still does it all! She sees patients in the prenatal clinic, the pediatric clinic, the cancer clinic and manages enzyme replacement treatment for individuals with storage disorders. Kerry even donated a kidney to one of her patients with Fabry disease who was in end stage renal failure, a selfless act not many of us would even consider. To remain current in all these areas is an amazing feat, one not many can accomplish and with such ease.”

“She is dedicated in every way to her patients and the field of genetic counseling. I can think of no other genetic counselor that deserves an award more than Kerry. She is such a humble and gentle person who would never draw attention to herself but is the type of counselor we should all strive to be. She is dedicated, giving, respectful, knowledgeable, and compassionate—all of the traits needed in a genetic counselor.”

“Kerry is a team player and is a gifted, compassionate, accepting, and intelligent woman. I continue to learn from her both academically and on a personal level day-by-day. I am sure the USC Genetic Counseling School is a better program because Kerry Crandall was a student. I am sure Western North Carolina and we at the Fullerton Genetics Center are a better program and better people because of the impact Kerry has had on our lives.”
...friend, colleague, educator, listener. Affectionately known as “RGB”, Dr. Robert G. Best has impacted the training of all 160+ graduates of our Program to date. Over the years, Dr. Best has spent many hours teaching the foundational first year course Medical Genetics, advising thesis projects, and teaching students to “develop their intuition” in and out of the classroom. Despite juggling his many program responsibilities and serving as Director of the Division of Genetics, Dr. Best always had time for his students. He enjoyed connecting with students on a personal level whether through a brief office chat or dinner at his house (even if to discuss his notorious 40+ hour final exam!!). With over 25 years devoted to USC Genetics, Dr. Bob Best has morphed his career into the realm of higher education administration.

While he’ll always be “Dr. Best” to our alum, he is also now the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs at the USC School of Medicine-Greenville, our newest medical school in South Carolina. He is building the faculty from ground up and recruiting students for the inaugural fall 2012 class. We all will miss him (who else can do Bayesian like Bob?), and we wish him the best! Fortunately, he is still a part of the USC family! CONGRATULATIONS DR. BEST!!!

In Dr. Best’s honor, several of our alumni have made donations to the Genetic Counseling Fund. As one of his former students said it best, we “Honor Dr. Bob Best for his dedication and guidance and years of devotion to the USC Genetic Counseling Program.”

- Vicki Vincent (1987)
- Kerry Crandall (1988)
- Ken Lou (1988)
- Sherri Babbs (1990)
- Christina Stanislaw (1994)
- Melissa Bennett (1997)
- Courtney Rowell Tate (2000)
- MaryAnn Whalen Campion (2000)
- Kathy Hayes (2000)
- Emily Hardisty (2001)
- Betsey Cook Dempsey (2001)
- Rhonda Scanlon (2002)
- Sharon Molinari (2003)
- Andrea Sellers (2005)
- Peggy Walker (2008)
- Sarah Hash (2008)
- Madison Foster (2011)
- Jaime Natoli (2011)

Welcome 2011-2012 Students

Pictured Front Row: Jade Cognetti, Kim Hamann, Elizabeth Ziglinski, Olivia Myers, Kelsey Johnson, Kalina Benedict, Vruti Mehta

Second Row: Cassandra Hollinger, Ginger Edwardsen, John Abernethy, Stephen White, Darcy Berry, Audra Bettinelli
Sonja Eubanks Higgins (1995) After 10 years as the Assistant Director of the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program, I left my position and moved to the Myrtle Beach, SC area after getting married in July of 2011. Myrtle Beach is an area without clinical genetic counseling services, so I am currently working on some projects from home and working towards teaching an undergraduate course in Human Genetics in the fall at Coastal Carolina University as part of their Health Promotion major. I was very blessed to enjoy my position at UNCG enormously and would have only traded it for the love of my life, Robert. He has two daughters and so I am a new step-mom to two delightful girls as well. Since I am in an area with limited clinical opportunities, I am interested in projects I can do from home. So if anyone has an interesting project you need help with, please contact me - sonjaeubanks@yahoo.com

Beth Allen (1996) I am in my 3rd year of my new venture as a full-time children’s director at my church. I miss genetics sometimes, but I love what I am doing! I still give genetics talks at my children’s schools for life science classes, so I get a little genetics fix every once and a while. I officially have a teenager – Cole is 13, and Brin is now 9. We are still living in Spanish Fort, Alabama and are all doing well.

Aubrey Turner (2000) Jenna and I have some big news. We have adopted a beautiful new daughter from China. Our family traveled to China in October 2011 to meet our newest family member and bring her home. We’ve named her Stella Grace Ann Turner. All around, she is doing fantastic. She is so curious, and always smiling. Her big brothers, Seth and Simon, have been a huge help.

Courtney Rowell Tate (2000) and her husband, Mark, welcomed the arrival of their son, Mason Emery Tate, on November 6, 2011. Courtney and family recently relocated to Bluffton SC (just outside of Hilton Head), where Courtney now works as an independent Marketing Consultant providing marketing & strategy consulting to healthcare companies.

Emily Hardisty (2001) From a professional standpoint, I am now the coordinator of reproductive genetic counseling services at UNC-Chapel Hill. Given my new responsibilities, I have passed off the role of clinical rotation supervisor to fellow USC alumnus, Sally Harris. My partner, John, and I are enjoying the fun and challenges that we face every day with our 4-year-old, Elsie, and our 1-year-old, Paul.

Rhonda Scanlon (2002) I will be soon dropping down to part time at Michigan State University to begin working two days per week for Informed Medical Decisions. I am excited about the prospect of working in this new market while maintaining a strong clinical role with MSU.

Kristen Frazer (2003) I can’t believe that I’ve been doing this for 8 1/2 years, but I’m still loving prenatal! I’m still traveling ……took three weeks in 2008 to travel to South America and in March 2012, my mom and I are going on a mission trip to Kenya. Since I’m the only genetic counselor for our practice I can’t leave for that long every year, but they are nice enough to work with me every 3-4 years. I’m still single and don’t have any kids, but I did finally commit to staying in Knoxville and I bought my first house in September.
Andrea Sellers (2005) We welcomed our daughter, Hollis Caroline, September 2, 2011

Bridgette Aufmuth (2005) has started a cancer genetics program at Greenville Hospital System in Greenville, SC, and is working as a part-time clinical counselor in a job-sharing arrangement. Brian and I are expecting our second daughter in February to join big sister Madelyn.

Erin Demo (2005) I am still in Atlanta doing genetic counseling in pediatric cardiology, but am cutting back a bit to spend time with my little girl, Katherine Gibbs Demo, born on 6/3/11. Things are super busy but really good!

Holly Hardin Zimmerman (2007) and her husband, Pat, welcomed their first child on August 3, 2011: a daughter named Fallon Elizabeth. Holly also recruited two new, fabulous genetic counselors to Mississippi! One of the new counselors, Emily Rosebrough, is a recent USC graduate!

Kate Wilson (2007) This past year has been pretty busy for myself and my family. In April, my husband and I welcomed our first child, Jackson. He keeps us on our toes constantly, and I am enjoying every minute! On the professional side, I just finished my first year as co-chair of the Prenatal SIG for NSGC, and I was honored to receive the NSGC New Leader Award at the AEC in October. Recently, I have transitioned into a new position at UT and am now a full time cancer counselor with the division of gynecologic oncology.

Anna Edens Hurst (2007) graduated from MUSC with an MD in May 2011, and then started pediatrics residency at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. Also last year she published a case report in the May 2011 issue of Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology about autism and duplications of Xp11.22-p11.23, along with Drs. Holden and Lyons from Greenwood Genetic Center.

Melissa Ciano (2007) We welcomed our son Austin James in December 2010 and we are expecting twins in April of this year. PS I passed my boards!

Karen Echerd Corneliussen (2007) This past year I was with Duke Pediatrics Medical Genetics in a clinical and research role with the Glycogen Storage Disease Program. Recently, I began an opportunity as a prenatal genetic counselor closer to home with Wake Forest Maternal-Fetal Medicine. On a personal note, my husband and I continue to live in Greensboro, NC, and we are expecting our first child, a girl, in May!

Rebecca Evans (2008) I started working at the Indiana Hemophilia & Thrombosis Center in August. While I don’t work with our patients here at the center, I am helping IHTC collaborate with the large Amish community in our state to create a clinic for Amish and Mennonite children with genetic disorders. The clinic is somewhat modeled after the Clinic for Special Children in PA and the DDC Clinic in OH. On a personal note, 2011 was a big year for Nate and me as we spent 2.5 months in Tanzania and bought our first home (and two dogs) in Indianapolis.

Sarah Hash (2008) I’m still working full time as the only genetic counselor at Maternal Fetal Medicine Associates of Maryland, a private perinatology office in Rockville. Ryan and I welcomed our daughter, Natalie Reagan, on June 14, 2011. We’re having a blast; she brings us so much joy! So far we are doing well with the work/parenthood balance.

Allison Bellomo (2009) I am now full time peds and no longer doing cancer genetics (which I miss by the way). My husband Ronnie and I bought our first house this April in Piedmont, SC and we are loving it :). My maternal grandmother recently passed away after making it to 100 years-old; I had the privilege of being with her during her last days. I am attempting to organize for licensure in SC and would appreciate any help or advice as I am very naive when it comes to law making. I recently had the privilege of being part of the 2012 Powerful Women Summit, which is an event for the SC Girl Scouts. I along with eleven other women (physical therapist, writer, cop, chef, sales, engineer) met with girls from all over the state to discuss our careers. So, now at least 100 girls in SC have heard about genetic counseling while they are in high school!
ALUMNI NEWS

Sara Rhode (2010) No personal updates; still working full time at three cancer centers in central CT. Healthy, happy, and busy.

Emily Rosebrough (2011) In June I began working at the University of Mississippi with the fantastic fellow alumnus, Holly Zimmerman. I counsel in a pediatric general genetics clinic as well as the children’s cancer clinic. A major goal of mine was to start a multidisciplinary clinic for 22q deletion syndrome. We kicked off the first clinic this past January! Soon, another counselor and myself will lead a support group for those who have experienced a pregnancy or neonatal loss.

Lindsay Langford (2011) I accepted a position as a cancer genetic counselor with Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, NC. I started in January, and am enjoying the opportunity to work alongside another USC alum, Stacy Lenarcic, as well as two other fantastic counselors. We are excited about our upcoming move to the brand new Levine Cancer Institute sometime in the fall of 2012.

FIRST ALUMNA TO RETIRE

Lyn Hammond Smith answers the question: **Why do you want to be a genetic counselor?** in her 1988 USC Genetic Counseling application.

**Read her TIMELESS WORDS:**

“I have chosen to be a genetic counselor because I see within the discipline, the clinical, educational, research and teamwork that I seek. I see the genetic counselor as having autonomy and credibility in patient care services, as being a viable member of the clinical care team. I see the need for problem solving techniques and information gathering. I see a patient-professional relationship requiring knowledge, judgment, intuition and compassionate intervention. I see a role in patient, community and professional education. I see ideas exchanged and nurtured and opportunities for learning and intellectual stimulation via interprofessional relationships and networking. I am drawn to the statistical and research components with hopes that computer applications are burgeoning. Genetics is a field that is wide open; making breakthroughs, altering how we define diseases, attracting dynamic people and stirring the medical community. Genetic counseling is the link to the future.”

Just so you know, we love to hear from our alum throughout the year! Keep those updates coming with pictures, too.

“You allowed me to step back and hold 20 years like a plum and go, hmmmm……. this has been full, truly this career has fulfilled me, and what wonderful support and collegiality my Program has provided, start to finish.”

-Lyn Hammond Smith, MS, CGC

Accepted into the Genetic Counseling Program in 1988, Lyn Hammond Smith, sets to enjoy her life as a retired genetic counseling professional.

Mrs. Smith was our special guest lecturer in March 2011. During her lecture, she reflected on her career as a genetic counselor and her long term service to the cystic fibrosis community.
First Name: ___________________________________ Last Name: ___________________________________________

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