

graduate alum notes

Dear Graduate Alumni

In my last report to you, I outlined the recent implementation of our new Web-based inquiry and application system. I can relate to you now that we are experiencing amazing results compared to past practices. The ease, convenience and efficiency of the online features have met with overwhelming applicant approval – not to mention that of our program directors. I'll be sure to keep you updated as the recruiting year progresses.

While on the topic of recruiting, I would like to offer an exciting opportunity to our graduate alumni. As we expand our graduate recruiting efforts to include wider regional and national applicant populations, the issue of local and personal contact with those potential applicants becomes problematic. Perhaps you recall that when you were in the graduate school application phase of your career, personal contact with prospective programs carried great weight in your decision-making. Although e-mail and long distance phone conversations are very useful, an informal, face-to-face discussion with an opportunity for extensive Q&A really makes a difference!

I am soliciting graduate alumni throughout the country who may be interested in serving as regional recruiters for the WSU School of Medicine graduate programs. Your in-depth knowledge of our first-rate faculty and our quality biomedical science training gives you the credibility prospective students are seeking. Although the details are yet to be established, in essence, you would receive information about applicants or potential applicants in your part of the state or country. After you review the information, we encourage you to arrange personal contact with the applicants. We are in the process of



developing a "recruiter's" package containing up-to-date information on the Detroit metro area, the school, its programs, financial aid matters, faculty and research strengths. We hope you will view this as a chance to "give back" to the school a measure of the opportunities and career training you experienced while at Wayne.

Certainly, you will need additional information before committing to such a program, but I would like to begin collecting the names and contact information of potential volunteers in the interim. A formal call for alumni recruiters will be made at a later date. However, if participating in this initiative appeals to you, please contact me directly at kpalmer@med.wayne.edu or phone (313) 577-1455. I am excited about the potential of this program, and I look forward to establishing a dedicated group of "alumni recruiters" who will make it happen!

As always, your keen interest in the WSU School of Medicine and the progress of our graduate biomedical science training is warmly appreciated.

Kenneth C. Palmer, PhD
Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs

Graduate Alumni Profile: Donna Krasnewich MD, PhD

When Donna M. Krasnewich, MD, PhD, was a fourth-year student at the School of Medicine, she elected to take a rotation at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She was given the opportunity to train at one of the world's most important medical research facilities. She was impressed by the environment at the institutes and was inspired to return after graduation.

Located in Bethesda, Md., the NIH is described as one of the world's leading medical research centers, and the federal focal point for medical research in the United States. It is comprised of 27 separate institutes and centers, and is one of eight health agencies of the Public Health Service, which, in turn, is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Simply described, the goal of NIH research is to acquire new knowledge to help prevent, detect, diagnose and treat disease and disability, from the rarest genetic disorder to the common cold. The NIH mission is to uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone.

Dr. Krasnewich heads the Medical Genetics Branch of the Medical Genetics Clinic and is associate investigator at the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) at the NIH. "I am very grateful to

have this opportunity," explained Dr. Krasnewich. "This is an interesting place. People here are genuinely and incredibly curious about medicine and science."

As an undergraduate, Dr. Krasnewich began working in a pharmacology lab at Wayne State University. Realizing that she had an interest in research, she returned to the pharmacology department as she pursued both her medical and graduate degrees. While studying under the mentorship of Dr. Roy McCauley, she made the most of her time at the School of Medicine and believes that the education she received provided her with the confidence necessary for her current occupation.

"I strongly believe that the education at the School of Medicine was superior, both in terms of the diversity of programs and in the pursuits of the faculty." She went on to explain, "The school had a great ratio of personal interaction between the students and the amount of personal attention provided by the instructors and this gave the students an excellent opportunity to interact with the faculty."

After graduation, Dr. Krasnewich did a brief residency in pediatrics at the University of Minnesota, and then served two years at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. From there, she joined the NIH and has been there for the last 14 years. She served as the acting clinical director of the NHGRI during 2001-2002

and continues to focus on important research.

According to Dr. Krasnewich, her area of research deals with diseases in children who have problems processing sugars. She is concentrating on a rare metabolic disease, congenital disorder of glycosylation or CDG. Only 300 cases of CDG exist worldwide, and increased physician awareness has resulted in identifying approximately 70 new cases in the United States in the past six years. Dr. Krasnewich studies rare diseases like these while treating many children and adults with other developmental, growth and nervous system disorders. "At the NIH, I have the ability to see my patients clinically and then have instant access to the lab for research. We can collect the information we need and immediately work on getting the problems solved."

Dr. Krasnewich reflects on her current position and credits her WSU education for playing a major role in her success. "We received a lot of great clinical experience. We were exposed to a wide breadth of experience incomparable to many other programs and it provided me with the remarkable ability to operate in any environment and the confidence to handle whatever situation I am put in."