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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

The Faculty of Pharmacy and the Pharmacy Alumni Association are delighted to be relaunching the Fiat Mist. This newly designed magazine dedicated to pharmacy alumni will provide us with a regular means of communicating with you, our cherished alumni community.

The Faculty is committed to staying in touch and engaging with its alumni and I hope that this publication will allow us to tell some of your fantastic stories as well as share with you some of the exciting developments in the Faculty. In this edition, you will read about the origins of Fiat Mist from one of its first editors, the story of the highly successful career of one of our graduates turned hotel mogul, be introduced to your newly elected Executive Committee and much more.

As Dean, it has been an exciting time at the Faculty in recent months. Investments in new facilities have ensured that we continue to lead the way in pharmacy education and research. Our students are considered to be amongst the most highly trained in Australia both academically and also thanks to their strong business management skills, research knowledge and pharmacy practice skills. Our academic and research staff are working on some of society’s most challenging diseases such as cancer, diabetes, asthma and cardiovascular disease, including several treatment programs for implementation by pharmacists on a national level.

The re-launch of Fiat Mist marks the beginning of a new era for the Faculty with alumni engagement becoming an integral part of its core activities. I hope to see many of you at our upcoming alumni events and I look forward to hearing your comments and feedback about this initiative.

Professor Iqbal Ramzan
(MSc 1977, PhD 1981)
Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Pharmacy Alumni Association was inaugurated in 1985 and aims to promote a lifelong connection between alumni, the Faculty and the University. Fiat Mist, our alumni magazine, has provided us with the opportunity to keep you abreast of the Association’s activities and hopefully inspire you to get involved.

The re-launch of Fiat Mist is part of a concentrated effort to bolster our alumni programs. On 12 May 2009, we hosted our Annual General Meeting at which a new Executive Committee was elected and a revised constitution adopted. The aim of our new committee is to design programs and activities that will appeal and be of benefit to alumni of all ages, sectors and backgrounds.

All graduates automatically become members of the Pharmacy Alumni Association and we hope that by reading this newsletter and attending our events you will realise just how enriching it can be to remain part of the university community after graduation.

I encourage you to share your stories with us and send us your suggestions and feedback so that together we can build a stronger Pharmacy Alumni Association.

Mr Ross Brown AM RFD ED
(Materia Medica 1952)
President of the Pharmacy Alumni Association
FIAT MIST – A HISTORICAL REFLECTION

The relaunching of Fiat Mist commences a new era for this newsletter of the Pharmacy Alumni Association at the Faculty of Pharmacy.

The name ‘Fiat Mist’ (not a mixture be made) was the obvious choice for this lifestyle newsletter, introduced in February 1996 with Margareth Trimble as Editor, as a means for communicating with pharmacy alumni.

Fiat Mist provided the vehicle for the promotion of many important functions, tours, restaurant and hotel reviews, reunions and not to mention the establishment of the successful Pharmacy Cricket during the Presidency of Greg Hodgson (Materia Medica 1952) in the year 2000.

There have been many highlights over the years, but none more successful than the two PdC – Materia Medica Recognition Ceremonies held in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney in 1997 and 1998. The Chancellor, Dame Leonie Kramer enthusiastically supported the ceremonies and presented the Recognition Certificates to the Materia Medica graduates.

The historic ceremonies were followed by a cocktail party on the lawns of the historic ceremonies were followed by the Materia Medica graduates. The program was restricted to young registered pharmacists under 35 years of age.

The role of ‘Fiat Mist’ was essential, not only to lifestyle enjoyment by pharmacy alumni, but the success of fundraising. In fact, in recalling these events, it is amazing that such events were organised by a small group of dedicated volunteers.

We must mention that all the foregoing only represents some of the more important activities and announcements promoted by Fiat Mist over a period of more than ten years.

We look forward to the continued success of the ‘new’ Fiat Mist in the future.

Ken Bickle AM (Materia Medica 1950) Former President of the Pharmacy Alumni Association (1985-1997) and Former Editor of ‘Fiat Mist’

• The refurbishment of the corridor of the Pharmacy Department in 1999 – the amount of $200,000 was raised, thanks to the support of alumni including generous contributions from Ross Brown (Materia Medica 1952) and Warwick Plunkett (BPharm 1965)
• Andrew Guillo (Materia Medica 1963) organised an exciting fundraising dinner at La Montage in Leichhardt
• The refurbishment of the Pharmacy Lecture Theatre creating a world-class ‘state of the art’ facility – a total of $250,000 was raised in the year 2003 of which the Women for Pharmacy Cocktail Party organised by Pati Payne (Materia Medica 1958) raised $40,000
• Numerous other successful events included overseas tours to China and France, gourmet weekends in Nundle Hills of Gold, Canberra and Orange and gourmet dinners at some of Sydney’s top restaurants
• A number of successful reunions were promoted, particularly the 50-year reunions of 1949 and 1950, the 40-year reunion of 1964 and the 30-year reunion of 1974. By far the most notable promotion was the ‘late 50’s’ reunion dinner held in the Great Hall on 11 November 2000 where 150 alumni attended this evening of nostalgia. The organising committee was from the Materia Medica group of 1957 and spearheaded by Barry Marks (Materia Medica)
• Another major project promoted by ‘Fiat Mist’ was the Pharmacy Leadership Development Program held at the University of Sydney over five intensive weekends in 1997, coordinated by the Council of the Pharmacy Alumni Association under the direction of Bob Lazzarini (Materia Medica). The program was restricted to young registered pharmacists under 35 years of age.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Charlotte Vidor (Materia Medica 1955) – Director, Toga Hospitality

Charlotte Vidor graduated Materia Medica from the University of Sydney in 1955, but since the early 80s has been the creative force behind the establishment in Australia of the serviced apartment concept. Through the Medina brand Charlotte, mother of three and wife of Ervin Vidor AM, has been a prominent figure in business and hospitality ever since.

So how did a pharmacist become a hotel tycoon? Charlotte first noticed the growing popularity of self-contained serviced apartments in the USA and decided that, adapted to Australian taste, they would work in Australia too. Charlotte says “The perception was that of holiday apartments where you hire the space and bring everything else along with you. I wanted something more luxurious than that and it was very tough to bring that idea to the market”.

With perseverance and the support of her family, the idea eventually took off. The Viders’ company Toga Hospitality now operates 45 Medina Apartment Hotels throughout Australia and Europe. The group also operates the Vibe chain: hip hotels ‘with personality’. At the other end of the market is the well-known Travelodge brand which Toga operates in Australia.

Nevertheless, the registered pharmacist became an entrepreneur for practical reasons. She and her girlfriends had originally wanted to study medicine, but, “...it took too long, so Materia Medica was the next obvious choice. In those days it wasn’t so difficult to get into the course but it was tough once you were there. I loved it though – I am still a registered Pharmacist. Clinical pharmacy is really my main interest, I still read all the journals avidly!”

Charlotte pursued a career in Pharmacy for some years after graduating from Sydney. However, as her family grew it became more difficult to work in the Relief Pharmacist role she had taken on after their births. “There are only so many times you can call up and tell them your kids are sick and you can’t cover the shifts,” she says. “It was difficult to say no to eventually I decided to take the opportunity to do something else... and I never left!”

After completing a Master in Urban Studies at Macquarie University, she began working alongside her husband in real estate. “I had the support of my family, especially my husband, but also I had great role models. My parents both ran their own business together and I wanted to work hard all their lives – I guess I just followed in their footsteps’.

“I really believe you go as far as you are capable”.

Charlotte and her husband are now an Australian success story, having built their business into one of the largest property groups in the country in less than 30 years.

Charlotte’s observations are full of inspiration for pharmacy graduates on the brink of setting up their own businesses: “I really believe you go as far as you are capable. For me, I would say there are three things that you have to do in order to achieve success: One – you must decide what you want to do and then stick to it; Two – don’t spend any time worrying about whether you have made the right decision; Three – Work hard at it. This is the bottom line. Really, without this, you won’t get anywhere”.

Charlotte Vidor was interviewed by Jaine Fleetwood
ALUMNI NEWS

Faculty of Pharmacy
Inaugural Public Symposium

On 12 May 2009, the Faculty hosted its inaugural alumni Public Symposium entitled “Pharmacy and the Australian Healthcare Sector: A Key Player or a Silent Partner?” Consultant Clinical Pharmacist Debbie Rigby was joined by the Faculty’s Pro-Dean, Professor Jo-anne Brien, and Alphapharm CEO John Montgomery to speak candidly about issues including pharmacists’ prescribing rights, Garling Report recommendations and generic substitution rates. The discussion was moderated by Professor of Pharmacy – Aged Care, Andrew McLachlan.

The panelists’ presentations stimulated strong discussion and debate, which is a testament to how passionate our alumni feel about becoming key players in this changing healthcare sector. Key areas of concern put forth by participants included the need for specialised post-graduate training, the importance of increased public visibility for pharmacists and increased collaboration with medical and other health care professionals. Dean of the Faculty, Professor Iqbal Ramzan, says “It was this kind of open dialogue that we hoped to initiate with our alumni and we are eager to host more forums like this in the future. Our alumni contribute greatly to the University of Sydney’s intellectual community.”

A New Executive Committee for the Pharmacy Alumni Association

On 12 May 2009 the Pharmacy Alumni Association held its Annual General Meeting, which was attended by over 50 alumni. A new Executive Committee was elected and a new constitution adopted. The new constitution, modelled after the University’s Alumni Council template, will ensure that the association will continue to strive for years to come. The Executive Committee had its first meeting on 18 June 2009 and is busy planning an exciting program of events and activities for the upcoming year.

2009/2010 Executive Committee Members

Ross Brown AM RFD Ed HonMPharm HonDPhilH (Syd)
Elie Abdallah (BPharm 2002)
Lillian Chen (BPharm 1990)
David Maxwell (BPharm 1996, DipHospPharm 1997)
Marisa Peterson (BPharm (Hons) 1978, PhD 1983)
Patti Payne OAM (Materia Medica 1958)
Lachlan Rose (BPharm 2004)

Alumni Online

In August, the University of Sydney officially launched its new web-based alumni community, AlumniOnline. All alumni should by now have received their alumni card in the mail, which along with other great benefits, gives you access to this exciting new service.

AlumniOnline allows you to update your details, find a classmate, enjoy a range of professional and social networking services and become an online mentor.

To logon, visit: www.sydney.edu.au/alumni

Anyone interested in ordering a copy of the photo, should contact Jennifer Paquet on 02 9114 6781.

Building Expansion Campaign

A campaign to raise awareness of the Faculty’s research and infrastructure needs – the largest fundraising campaign ever undertaken was successful in securing $1,044,753 in donations for the Faculty’s Building Fund in 2008. The money will support the expansion of the Faculty into the adjoining Bank and Badham buildings, enabling an increase in student intake by 25% and allowing the Faculty to upgrade the facilities for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and research and academic staff. The donations have come from very generous alumni and supporters of the Faculty, including the President of the Pharmacy Alumni Association Mr Ross Brown and major pharmacy group Blooms The Chemist.

Materia Medica alumni meet after 50 years

In November 2008, over 70 Materia Medica alumni and guests of the Pharmacy Alumni Association visited the Faculty, some for the first time in 50 years. Ross Brown (Materia Medica 1952), Laurice Jones (Materia Medica 1958) and Sue Brown (Materia Medica 1958) spent many hours tracking down alumni friends and organising the event. After tours of the Faculty facilities and a morning tea, the alumni celebrated their reunion over lunch. Mat Med-ers travelled long distances from England, Darwin and Queensland to participate in this special day. Speakers on the day included Vice-Chancellor Dr Michael Spence, Dean Iqbal Ramzan and Director of Alumni Relations, Tracey Beck who were all moved by the bond that this group still shared despite 50 years having gone by.
FACULTY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Cancer Council funding for customising chemotherapy

Cancer researchers in the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Sydney received over $630,000 in research project grant awards at the 2009 Cancer Research Awards. Professor of Pharmacogenomics, Michael Murray, secured funding to improve certain cancer treatment therapies by tailoring them to the genetic makeup of individuals. Professor Murray's research is currently evaluating the biotransformation and transport of important tyrosine kinase inhibitors that are used to treat leukaemia and renal cancer. Dr Mary Bebawy received an award for her research into the role of drug transporters and drug resistance in cancer which will focus on microparticle-mediated transfer of P-glycoprotein in conferring multidrug resistance in cancer.

In search of the perfect CMI document

The advantages and disadvantages of producing and distributing Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) to patients alongside their medications is an important topic of discussion amongst health professionals. Research within the Faculty is contributing to the heart of this debate, with Dr Parisa Aslani, a Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, currently investigating many aspects of the use and application of CMI amongst patients, pharmacists, doctors and other stakeholder groups. By collecting qualitative and quantitative data from consumers, pharmacists, GPs, CMI writers and other key stakeholders, the team's ultimate aim is to develop alternative CMI formats. Dr Aslani says "currently there is limited compelling evidence to show that well designed CMIs result in greater use of medicines; or a more positive impact on patient medicine knowledge; or quality use of medicines in authentic settings especially long-term use. Even if the current CMI is a "perfect document" why are people not using it? Where is the evidence that says CMI is one of the most important documents to give to patients? Do people want this information in the first place or do they just ignore it?" Little research has been done on evaluating the impact of CMI leaflets on patients' long term medication taking behaviour in Australia, although it is known that consumers tend to focus on negative aspects of information such as adverse side effects". Dr Aslani hopes her current research project will provide the answers.

Support for the next generation of rural pharmacists

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia presented 3 students from the Faculty of Pharmacy with rural awards and scholarships. Hayley Bell and Judy Wong received Remote and Rural Pharmacy Scholarships, and Rebecca Curtis received the Rural Pharmacy Student Award to attend the 10th National Rural Health Alliance Conference in May 2009. Although 30% of Australians live in rural communities, the majority of pharmacy graduates choose to work in suburban pharmacies, creating a serious shortage of pharmacists working in rural areas.

Dr Lisa Pont, Lecturer (Rural and Aboriginal Health) confirmed, however, that the Faculty of Pharmacy has a strong commitment to rural pharmacy: "Under our new curriculum all students will gain knowledge and skills in rural and aboriginal health issues, including an opportunity to experience a clinical placement in a rural or remote region. It is essential to keep pharmacists in rural communities and we are very excited to have had such a strong response from students, with 168 Year 4 students expressing an interest in undertaking a rural placement in 2009".

The Rural and Remote Pharmacy Scholarship Scheme is an initiative of the Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program, established in recognition of the key role pharmacists play in maintaining the health of all Australians. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, and managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the scheme encourages rural pharmacy students to pursue a pharmacy career in rural or remote Australia after graduation, and helps to cover costs associated with studying away from home.

Female academic aims high

Dr Sinthia Bonic-Anticicich, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice in the Faculty of Pharmacy has been awarded one of the University of Sydney’s inaugural Thompson Fellowships. This year, under the leadership of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Jill Trewhella, the University has established two fellowships designed to promote equity and diversity at the University. The Thompson Fellowship addresses the under-representation of women in senior academic positions. The Thompson Fellowship is designed to provide opportunities for female academic staff to develop and strengthen their research, preparing them to apply for, and assume, senior academic roles in the near future. Professor Trewhella said the fellowships marked an important step towards making the University a female-friendly workplace.
WOMEN FOR PHARMACY
A committee of the Pharmacy Alumni Association

The Mission of Women for Pharmacy is to help women in pharmacy reach their full potential by providing vital networking and mentoring opportunities.

Several years ago, a group of like-minded female pharmacists, Mrs Patti Payne OAM (Materia Medica 1958), Dr Sinthia Bosnic-Anticevich (BPharm 1992, PhD 1997), Mrs Lyn Bronger (BPharm 1975, MBA 2000, HonFellow 2007), Professor Carol Armour (BPharm 1977, PhD 1982), Mrs Margaret Bickle AO (Materia Medica 1956) and Associate Professor Ines Krass (BPharm 1969, GradDipEd 1986, DipHospPharm 1974, PhD 1991) reflected on their varying pharmacy career paths and the professional fulfilment they had experienced. They soon realised that an important part of what inspired and fulfilled them in their careers and personal lives were the opportunities and insights gained from role models, mentors and networking opportunities with other women both within the profession and outside the profession. They also realised that unfortunately, mentoring and networking opportunities are often difficult to find within pharmacy. From this was born the Women for Pharmacy Committee.

Today, the Women for Pharmacy Committee (a committee of the Pharmacy Alumni Association) has a network of over 200 women and at the core of its mission, aims to provide vital networking and mentoring opportunities for women. This mission has been accomplished through the establishment of networks in several geographical areas which allows the specific needs and aspirations of local women to be addressed. Various activities including dinner lectures and annual symposiums are organised regularly to provide women with the opportunity to network and explore mentoring opportunities.

Since its foundation in 2001, Women for Pharmacy has helped women purchase pharmacies, find part-time and full-time employment within their networks and support women in their bids to take-up positions in professional organisations at the executive level. Women for Pharmacy offers networking and mentoring opportunities for women of all ages and stages of their career, helping them to realise their career aspirations.

For more information, please contact Patti Payne (Chair) on fspayne@ozemail.com.au or visit the alumni webpage at www.pharm.usyd.edu.au/alumni

CLASS NOTES

FOR YOUR DIARY

September 2009

19 September
Spring Back to Sydney Alumni Reunion
Bring your family and friends to enjoy a day of festivities, cultural and family activities.

26 September
Great Hall Anniversary
The Great Hall’s 150th anniversary will be celebrated with a day of heritage tours open to the public.

25 September
1949 Materia Medica 60-year Reunion
A 60th year reunion is to be held at the University of Sydney beginning at 11am with a tour of the Faculty of Pharmacy. A luncheon will follow.

For more information, please contact Mrs Laurice Jones, 02 9746 8239 or ljones@stvima.pyramai.net

October 2009

2 October
1959 Materia Medica 50-year Reunion
A 50th year reunion is to be held at the University of Sydney beginning at 11am with a tour of the Faculty of Pharmacy. A luncheon will follow.

For more information, please contact Mr Gerry Benjamin, 02 9453 3255 or gben@bigpond.com

31 October
Faculty of Health Sciences 30th Anniversary
A family fun day to celebrate 30 years of health sciences.

For more information or to view more alumni events visit: www.usyd.edu.au/alumni/event
Update your details online
Moved house or changed jobs?
Update your details online at
www.usyd.edu.au/stayconnected

Where has your Pharmacy degree taken you?
We are always looking for news about your career paths and achievements for potential inclusion in an alumni publication. Send us your story via email at alumni@pharm.usyd.edu.au

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