**History of the Health Sciences**

OPENING DOORS—THE MAKING OF AN AFRICAN AMERICAN ACADEMIC SURGEON

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Marcia Day Childress, Ph.D., moderator

Underrepresented minority students, and all students for that matter, need to see a real-life example to believe that they too can achieve success. To serve as role models and mentors for the next generation of surgeons is another significant reason that the number of African American and Latino American academic surgeons needs to be increased. (PD Butler, MT Longaker, LD Britt. Major deficit in the number of underrepresented minority academic surgeons persists. *Annals of Surgery* 248:704-711, 2008)

Frequent trips to the hospital emergency department introduced a hyperkinetic, accident-prone, sensitive, and insecure child to the world of medicine. Observing others in the hospital setting who possessed talents and gifts that he did not yet see in himself, this young African American male was inspired to become a doctor. Dorian Wilson, M.D. never planned for a career in academic medicine, nor as an academic surgeon has he sought rewards in laboratory breakthroughs, research grants, or a national profile. Rather, in developing his own humanistic attributes and in delivering patient-centered care as a transplant surgeon, he has found his calling as an educator, an institutional leader, and a mentor and role model to scores of underrepresented minority students aspiring to become physicians and surgeons.

This Medical Center Hour celebrates the growing number of African American surgeons in U.S. medical schools. But the need to swell their ranks remains great. Communities, school systems, colleges and universities, and medical schools alike are challenged to encourage and prepare young minority students to study and succeed in medicine. Increasing the numbers of underrepresented minorities in academic surgery in particular will help to create a more culturally and ethnically sensitive health care environment, foster research on minority health care needs, and assure mentors and models for future minority surgeons. Now the surgery residency program director and head of the Newark-based New Jersey Medical School's Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey Center for Humanism and Medicine, Dr. Wilson offers his own story as one facet of the recent history of African American academic surgeons.

*Co-presented with the History of the Health Sciences Lecture Series and in conjunction with "Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons," the National Library of Medicine's traveling exhibit now on display in the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library*
Suggested resources:

**Dorian J. Wilson MD** holds degrees from Dartmouth College (BA) and UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School (MD). He trained in surgery at UMDNJ-NJMS and the University of Pittsburgh, with Dr. Thomas Starzl. Upon joining the surgery faculty at UMDNJ-NJMS, he became a founding member of the school's Division of Liver and Hepatobiliary Surgery. He served for three years as a transplant surgeon in the US Air Force before returning to UMDNJ and has served twice as medical director for the New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network. He is now associate professor of surgery at UMDNJ, director of the general surgery residency program, and director of the medical school's Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey Center for Humanism and Medicine. Dr. Wilson has won the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award and two Golden Apple Teaching Awards at NJMS, the Frances Black Humanitarian Award in Healthcare of the Friends' Health Connection, the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey's Humanism Award, the Thurgood Marshall Excellence Award of the Thurgood Marshall Foundation, and awards from the Newark Municipal Council and the New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network. He is a trustee of the American Society of Minority Health and Transplant Professionals. Dr. Wilson has recently published *Reflections: Observations About Life*, his first book.

**Wendi El-Amin MD** is a graduate of Hampton University (BA) and Georgetown University School of Medicine (MD). She completed her family medicine residency at the University of Texas-Houston and served as chief resident there. She joined the UVA faculty in family medicine in 2005. She is assistant dean of medical education, directs community outreach for UVA's Center on Health Disparities, and leads the UVA Cancer Center Health Disparities Initiative. One of the 2006 Community Award recipients for the UVA Health System, just this month she was named an EOP Champion by UVA. Dr. El-Amin works to bridge UVA with the community by reaching beyond the walls of the academic medical center's hospitals and clinics to churches and civic organizations where community members gather. She is committed to meeting people on their grounds to build partnerships for healthier communities. She is also committed to strengthening the medical pipeline for underrepresented minorities. Her research and teaching focus on health disparities, HIV, community health, cultural competency, the health of the incarcerated, and obesity.

This is our last Medical Center Hour of the fall semester. Spring semester programs begin on Wednesday, 3 February 2010. Watch for announcements of our program lineup.

The Medical Center Hour is produced weekly during the academic year by the Center for Biomedical Ethics and Humanities. In partnership with Historical Collections of the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, our series includes History of the Health Sciences Lectures. For more information, call 434.924.2094 or see www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/medcenterhour and www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/library/historical/lectures.cfm.

Watch the Medical Center Hour on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/uvamch and also on Comcast channel 13, Wednesday evenings, 8:00 pm (television programs are normally aired two weeks after live presentation).

The UVA School of Medicine is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians. UVA SoM designates this educational activity for a maximum of 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with their participation in the activity. UVA SoM awards 0.1 CEU per contact hour to each non-physician participant who successfully completes this educational activity. The CEU (Continuing Education Unit) is a nationally recognized unit of measure for continuing education and training activities meeting specific educational planning requirements. UVA SoM maintains a permanent record of participants awarded CEUs.
Learning objectives:

1. Learn about the need for African American and other minority physicians and surgeons in medical schools.
2. Consider the narrative of one contemporary African American surgeon, including his early development and his academic career in both surgery and medical education.