

This will be the last issue of the DOM Newsletter for the academic year – we'll resume in the fall. After writing about many of the same topics over the years, we decided to try an experiment. My column in this issue focuses on highlighting the career of one of our distinguished faculty members. Dr. Stan Lemon agreed to be the subject of this initial attempt. What I am thinking is that we will do something like this once or twice a week if this is something you would like to see. So please give me your feedback either directly or through Sarah Perry (link) in my office.

Another bit of news to pass on to you is that Sarah Perry, whom many of you know and who has done a great deal to keep the newsletter going over the past several years, will be leaving this summer. Sarah will be starting a Masters in Fine Arts Program at Columbia University in New York City. We all wish her a fond farewell. Replacing her will be no small task. Indeed, if we have a few hiccups with the newsletter in the fall, please bear with us.

So on with the first of our faculty profiles. This week, Dr. Stan Lemon, a Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases, is our featured faculty member. Stan is not really new to UNC or the Department of Medicine. He first came to UNC for his internship and residency in Internal Medicine here from 1972 to 1975, and his fellowship in Infectious Diseases with us from 1975-1977, when he studied Epstein-Barr virus under Dr. Joseph Pagano. Stan then served in the Army as an Assistant Professor in the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and as a staff physician in the Infectious Diseases Section at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center from 1977-1983. During that period, he directed a laboratory at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research that was charged with developing better methods for control of viral hepatitis, benefiting substantially from the Army's long tradition of infectious diseases research. He then returned to the faculty at UNC, replacing Dr. Fred Sparling as Chief of Infectious Diseases. Following his stint as Chief of ID, Stan became Associate Chairman for Research in 1991.

In 1997, Stan left UNC to become Chair of the Department of Microbiology & Immunology at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston. In 1999, he became Dean of the School of Medicine at UTMB, a position he served in for 5 years before becoming the John Sealy Distinguished University Chair and Director of the Institute for Human Infections and Immunology in 2004, two positions he held until earlier this year. During his tenure in Galveston, he led UTMB's efforts to develop the Galveston National Laboratory, a maximum containment BSL4 infectious disease laboratory constructed under a \$115 million grant from NIH. I worked with Stan when we were both at UTMB and, as he was and is here, Stan was a revered part of that institution.

Stan returned to the UNC Department of Medicine on May 1st of this year. He cites several reasons for his return, chief among them being the ability to collaborate with outstanding researchers who are working in areas relevant to his field. Dr. Lemon's chief research interest is in hepatitis C viruses, how they evade the human immune response, and how they contribute to cirrhosis of the liver and the development of liver cancer. His return to UNC, made possible in large part by the University Cancer Research Fund, presents wonderful opportunities for collaborative research in these areas, particularly

with Dr. Jenny Ting's laboratory and with other members of the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center who are interested in the innate immune response to viruses and virally-caused cancers. He also looks forward to developing translational research programs with Dr. Mike Fried in the Division of Gastroenterology, whose work focuses on the clinical treatment of hepatitis C, and with other faculty in the ID Division and Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) led by Dr. Ron Swanstrom. Importantly, hepatitis C has become a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in patients living with HIV infection. Hepatitis C is also a rapidly emerging problem in China, and Stan will be working with Mike Cohen to identify opportunities to enhance UNC's current international efforts in this area.

Stan's lab is a complex operation, and he considers himself fortunate that many of its members moved with him from Galveston, including two Research Assistant Professors: Dr. David McGivern, whose primary interest is in epigenetic changes associated with hepatitis C-related liver cancer, and Dr. Yan Yang, who is working on the innate immune response to the virus. Of the group's many achievements, two of the most striking include the development of methods for production of infectious hepatitis C virus in cell culture, and their contribution to the understanding of how proteases expressed by hepatitis viruses contribute to evasion of the immune response, a major focus of their work. In the years that they have been studying the disease, he and other researchers in the field have gained a better understanding of the multiple ways in which this pathogenic virus has adapted to life in the liver, evolved to evade the host's efforts at surveillance for pathogens, and produces epigenetic changes that promote the development of liver cancer.

Stan has received a number of special awards and distinctions, including, perhaps most notably, the John Enders Award for Contributions in Medical Virology from the Infectious Disease Society of America, which included a keynote lecture by him at the Society's annual meeting last year. He has also received the Commissioner's Special Citation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1996 for his service as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Antiviral Drugs (a committee he served on at the time that AZT therapy was approved), and later Chair of the FDA's Advisory Committee on Vaccines and Related Biologics. Stan received a competitive Kenan Research Leave from UNC in 1989, which allowed him to gain experience in an industry setting with Wellcome Biotechnology outside of London. This experience allowed him to set up lifelong collaborations with many colleagues in Europe.

Upon returning to UNC after his recent fourteen-year absence, Stan reports that he is most struck by the growth of the institution in many spheres: not only in the Division of Infectious Diseases and the Department of Medicine as a whole, but also in the breadth and excellence of the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and in the physical plant of the School of Medicine. The recruitment of Mike Fried shortly after Stan left in 1997 has greatly strengthened opportunities for interdisciplinary research between the ID and GI Divisions focusing on viral infections of the liver. But, while the Department is a much more sophisticated entity and has made tremendous progress over this period, Stan notes that the old strengths that previously characterized the UNC School of Medicine - most notably the ways in which clinical and basic scientists interact and collaborate across department lines, which is one of the key factors that attracted him

back - remain largely unchanged. We are most fortunate that Stan has returned to UNC, to make a strong division, department, and institution even stronger.