Richard Baron, MD, Assumes New Position of Dean for Clinical Practice

After serving as Chairman of the Department of Radiology at the University of Chicago since 2002, Dr. Richard Baron assumed the role of Dean for Clinical Practice for the Medical Center on January 7, 2011. The offer was extended to Dr. Baron by Dr. Kenneth Polonsky, Dean of the Biological Sciences Division and Pritzker School of Medicine and Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs. In his new role, Dr. Baron will extend the clinical practice infrastructure that already exists in the faculty practice plan and will work closely with Dr. Polonsky and the clinical faculty to ensure that Medical Center has the best and most successful clinical practice possible. Dr. Polonsky states that he is “delighted” that Dr. Baron accepted the role: “He brings to this position extensive experience in academic physician practices. While at the University of Pittsburgh he was the founding President and CEO of the University of Pittsburgh Physicians, one of the country’s largest medical provider groups (currently with more than 2,100 physicians), and served in that role from 1997 to 2002. As chair of Radiology here at the University of Chicago he has been active in key roles focusing on hospital- and BSD-wide physician practice issues.”

As the Dean for Clinical Practice is a near-full-time position, Dr. Baron agreed to relinquish his role as Chairman of the Department of Radiology. Dr. Baron announced his intentions during a November faculty meeting and subsequent memo to the faculty: “While I look forward to starting on a new focus in my activities here at the University, it is of course with some feeling of loss that I will be less actively involved in the administration of the Department of Radiology. Whatever successes I have had here that have led the Dean and the University leadership to appoint me to this position reflect as much or more on the efforts and quality of the individuals within the Department that is now recognized institution wide as a quality leader on the campus”. The past eight years during which the Department was under Dr. Baron’s successful leadership saw a near twofold growth in total procedural volume, recruitment of several nationally and internationally renowned faculty members, installation of state-of-the-art equipment, and application of quality improvement practices that have placed the Department in the highest possible esteem within the Medical Center. Dr. Baron states that he plans to participate in the Department’s clinical and educational activities to the same extent that he did as Chairman.

Dr. David Paushter has agreed to serve as the Interim Chairman of the Department of Radiology. Dr. Paushter, who is currently Professor of Radiology at the University of Chicago, has served as Vice Chairman of the Department for Clinical Operations since his arrival in 2005, and has also served as Section Chief of Abdominal Imaging and as the Department’s Quality Chair. A national search will be initiated shortly to identify a permanent leader for the Department of Radiology.
Faculty Spotlight - Dr. Greg Katzman

Dr. Greg Katzman has joined the faculty of the Department of Radiology as Associate Professor in the Neuroradiology Section. Dr. Katzman brings to the Department his expertise in adult and pediatric neuroradiology. He received his undergraduate and medical school education at Indiana University and completed his radiology residency at the Methodist Hospital of Indiana. Following a two year fellowship in neuroradiology at Georgetown University, he served on the faculties of Northwestern University and the University of Utah before becoming Chair of Radiology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. In addition to his recognized clinical skills, Dr. Katzman is a leading educator in neuroradiology, has developed extensive digital learning tools and has published clinical educational materials in some of the most widely read textbooks and digital educational sites. We are fortunate to have Dr. Katzman and his talents at the University of Chicago!

Department of Radiology Recognized for Strongest Improvement in Patient Satisfaction Scores

As part of a new program to recognize departments that have improved their patient satisfaction scores, senior leaders of the medical center honored the Outpatient Services Unit of the Department of Radiology for strongest improvement in patient satisfaction results during the latter half of 2010. An outside tracking firm audits the results from surveys distributed to a random sampling of patients. “Patient satisfaction is obviously one of our highest priorities, and I am delighted with the effort and teamwork that has gone into raising these scores,” said Kenneth S. Polonsky, Dean of the Biological Sciences Division and Pritzker School of Medicine and Executive Vice President of Medical Affairs for the University of Chicago. The Radiology Department’s outpatient services unit was recognized for making the greatest stride in the survey category of “Most likely to recommend the University of Chicago over any other hospital.” “It’s a great honor,” said Monica Geyer, assistant director of radiology. “I’m very proud of all of our radiology employees. We have been working diligently on making sure the patients have the best experience here.”
Radiology Exhibit Receives Cum Laude Award at RSNA Meeting

A topical exhibit presented by the Department of Radiology at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the RSNA was honored with a Cum Laude Award. “When the Dust Settles: Radiology after Health Care Reform” was created by Dr. Christopher Buckle, senior resident in the University of Chicago Radiology Department, with co-authors Jennifer E. Nathan, MD, Ronald Buckle, and Richard L. Baron, MD. The exhibit reviewed the historic relevance of Medicare, the present need for reform, and the future of health care reform. “New legislation will create new opportunities and challenges for radiology practices, academic and private alike.” states Dr. Buckle. In addition, Certificates of Merit were awarded to the following exhibits from the University of Chicago Department of Radiology: “Normal Anatomic and Developmental Variants Encountered on Magnetic Resonance Imaging Studies of the Knee” (Whetsell WM, Stacy GS) and “Imaging of Acute Abdominal Pain in Pregnant Patients with an Emphasis on MR Imaging” (Schmid-Tannwald C, Yacoub J, Agrawal G, Dahi F, Ernst RD, Oto A). These and other exhibits can be viewed on the RSNA website, http://lakeside2010.rsna.org/.

Recent Grants

**Patrick LaRiviere, PhD**: DOD IDEA award entitled: "High Resolution Large Field of View Ultrasound Breast Imager" has been funded for $489,000, in collaboration with Bob Schmidt and Jas Sandhu.

Attention Alums!

We want to hear from YOU! Do you have any accomplishments or achievements that you would like to share? Or do you just want to let your colleagues know what you’ve been up to?

E-mail Mandy at mvelligan@radiology.bsd.uchicago.edu and give us an update that we can share in our next newsletter!
A leader in the early days of radiation therapy for cancer, Melvin L. Griem, Professor Emeritus in Radiation and Cellular Oncology, died of pneumonia Feb. 7 at The Grove at Lincoln Park in Chicago. He was 85. Griem was a pioneer who helped to establish radiation oncology as a separate field from diagnostic radiology. He was among the first to work with heavy particle emitters instead of X-rays, and he helped create the neutron therapy unit at the University of Chicago in the 1970s. He performed important studies on the long-term consequences of radiation exposure in a therapeutic setting.

Griem combined “a background in physics, a medical education, a concern for patients with cancer, broad vision, unbridled enthusiasm and energy,” said Harold Sutton, Professor Emeritus of Radiation Oncology. “He was a special man who met the multiple opportunities and challenges of a rapidly evolving specialty with great creative energy and vision.” Ralph Weichselbaum, the D.K. Ludwig Professor and Chair of Radiation and Cellular Oncology, added “He was a visionary, ahead of his time.”

In the late 1950s, Griem and colleagues studied how various drugs or hormones could enhance the effects of radiation therapy for certain types of cancer. In the 1960s, he performed clinical studies of interstitial radiation therapy, implanting radioactive chromium “seeds” into cancerous tissue to deliver high doses to tumor cells but reduce the damage to nearby health cells. This approach produced “favorable” responses and a few lasting successes. A similar technique is now widely used for treatment of prostate cancer. In 1975, he helped launch a neutron-therapy unit for cancer treatment at the University of Chicago, one of the first four such facilities in the United States and, at the time, the only one based at a hospital. He also was known internationally for innovative treatments such as total skin irradiation for mycosis fungoides. Griem also studied the long-term consequences of therapeutic radiation. In a 1994 study—a marvel of after-the-fact detective work—he showed that gastric irradiation, used from the 1930s to the 1960s to decrease stomach acid in patients with recurrent stomach ulcers, could increase the risk of death from cancers of the stomach, lung and pancreas decades after therapy.

Born May 22, 1925 in Milwaukee, Melvin Luther Griem was destined, his colleagues recall, for a life that included engineering. As a teenager, he and some friends designed and built a diving suit, complete with an air pump. These mechanical and engineering skills helped him gain a leadership role in an emerging field, where science was often far ahead of technology, and those interested in testing new approaches had to build their own equipment. “He was an engineer at heart; he could fix electronics or replace the engine in his Mercedes,” recalled his son-in-law, Anthony Montag, Professor of Pathology. “When he was unable to get parts for his microwave oven, he machine-tooled a new part and reassembled the oven. It worked perfectly, but he was incapable of using it to heat up leftovers.” Griem joined the United States Army in May 1943, having just turned 18, and served as a radio repairman until the end of World War II, in August 1945. He returned to college, earning his BS in electrical engineering in 1948, MS in physics in 1950 and MD in 1953, all from the University of Wisconsin. In medical school he met fellow student Sylvia Fudzinski, also of Milwaukee. “I couldn’t read my notes,” he often joked, but he could read hers, “so I married her.” After graduation, they spent a year as interns at the University of Kansas. Both came to the University of Chicago in 1954 to complete their residencies, hers in dermatology and his in radiology. He joined the faculty as an Instructor in Radiology in 1957, was appointed Assistant Professor in July 1958 and Associate Professor in 1961. In 1966 he became a Professor and Section Chief of Radiation Therapy. That same year he was named Director of the Chicago Tumor Institute, a group that pulled together radiation treatment resources from the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago and Michael Reese Hospital. A prolific researcher and author of academic papers, Griem also trained dozens of radiation oncologists, including many academicians and chairmen.

Dr. Griem was a 2010 recipient of the Paul C. Hodges Alumni Excellence Award.