

UT Neurosurgery Team Puts Teen on the Road to Recovery

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Mohanty and physician's assistant Lee Bonner rolled Devin into a fetal position. Mohanty performed the lumbar puncture, inserted a small tube into the spinal canal and controlled the drainage of a small amount of fluid. Meanwhile, Bonner watched Devin's pupils to make sure they didn't dilate — a sign of further brain injury and bad prognosis.

This was Devin's turning point — when she stopped slipping away and started recovering. The pressure immediately began to drop and the brain swelling subsided.

"Patients don't usually survive intracranial pressure as high as Devin's," Mohanty said. "When all other measures failed, we tried this as a last resort."

Almost one month after the accident, Devin began to talk and her memory returned.

Mohanty had been concerned that the area of her brain where language is stored had been damaged during the accident, but Devin had no problems. An aspiring language translator, Devin awoke from her coma with her English, Spanish, Chinese and American Sign Language skills intact.

"She has no deficit at all. She came back 100 percent," Kincade said. "She is amazing. She truly is a miracle."

Devin said she not only has her life back, but she also has a new outlook on life.



Aaron Mohanty, M.D. Photo by Ester Fant

Before the accident, Devin said, she was heading down the wrong path. She had a strained relationship with her family and had sabotaged her grades by skipping college classes. She also was depressed.

"I seriously feel like a whole new person now," Devin said. "I'm loving it." She is finishing up TIRR (The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research) Challenge Program, an outpatient program for patients with brain injury. She plans to re-enroll in college in 2006 and wants to pursue a career in language translation.

"I love being able to speak other languages," she said. "It opens up your world to so many more possibilities. You can meet so many more people if you can understand and speak their language."

Mohanty said Devin's outcome demonstrates a need to conduct clinical trials to determine whether draining cerebrospinal fluid is safe and yields better outcomes than currently accepted therapies for patients with brain injury.

"This is an area of interest that I would like to explore," Mohanty said. "We have much to learn about this procedure."

Kincade said her family felt blessed to have a choice when it came to Devin's medical care.

"We were so impressed with the skill and level of care she received," Kincade said. "God has blessed us in so many ways." ★

★ ★ ★ Stars ★ ★ ★

Executive

★ **James T. Willerson, M.D.**, president of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and president-elect of the Texas Heart Institute at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, has been named the 2006 recipient of the annual Libin/Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research Prize in Cardiovascular Research.

★ **Charles W. "Bill" McClain Jr.**, Maj. Gen.-retired, assistant to James T. Willerson, M.D., president of the UT Health Science Center, was the guest speaker for a Veterans Day observance by the Willis Independent School District. McClain spent 33 years as the U.S. Army's chief of public affairs. He said Veterans Day is a time to remember the "sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and buddies who gave the ultimate sacrifice."

Fellows

★ **Harrys Torres, M.D.**, infectious diseases fellow, was honored with a Clinical Research Award for "Influenza Infection in Adult Patients with Leukemia: The Impact of Neuraminidase Inhibitors" at the Infections in Cancer Symposium Nov. 10-11 at the UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

★ **Ayesha Mian, M.D.**, a former fellow in child and adolescent psychiatry at the UT Medical School at Houston, was selected as an American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 2005 Presidential Scholar, receiving a stipend to support a one-week tutorial to study with a leading AACAP member. She also received funding to attend the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Joint Annual Meeting in Toronto in October. Her mentor at the Medical School was Cynthia Santos, M.D.

Alumni/Alumnae

★ **Matthew C. Mireles, Ph.D.**, holder of master's and doctoral degrees from the School of Public Health, is the new president and director of research of Bellaire-based CRG Medical Foundation, which was formed in 2003 as an active nonprofit learning organization dedicated to building a culture of patient safety and patient-centered medicine and practice.

Students

★ The 2005 C. Frank Webber Prize for Student Research awards were held during the annual Research Forum Oct. 27 in the Fifth Floor Gallery of the Medical School. Medical students who participated in the 2005 Summer Research Program presented scientific research posters, which were judged for the Webber Prize awards. Co-winners for first place were **Brannon George** (sponsored by David Wainwright, M.D.) and **Mai Kim Tran** (sponsored by Heinrich Taegtmeier, M.D., D.Phil). Second place winner was **Chad Lonsford** (sponsored by Dianna Milewicz, M.D., Ph.D.). Third place winner was **Michael Greaser** (sponsored by Heidi Kaplan, Ph.D.).

★ **Paul Dahm (MS IV)** and **Lindsey Hicks (MS II)** had their research abstracts accepted for poster presentation at the 4th Annual AMA-MSS Research Poster Competition in Dallas Nov. 4. Dahm's poster was named "Top in Category" for Surgery, and Hicks' poster was featured in the Clinical/Epidemiological/Healthcare category.

★ **Lihigh Zhang**, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and a Ph.D. candidate in the laboratory of Ke-He Ruan, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor in the Hematology Division of the Department of Internal Medicine, is co-author, with Ruan and his former post doc fellow J. Wu, Ph.D., of "A profile of the residues in the first intracellular loop critical for Gs-mediated signaling of human prostacyclin receptor characterized by an integrative approach of NMR-experiment and mutagenesis." The article was published in the Aug. 30, 2005 issue of *Biochemistry*.

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 15 – MARCH 14

February

★ **16** — Neurosurgery Interesting Case Conference, **7:30 a.m.**, Medical School Building, Room 7.037.

★ **20** — Full closure holiday for Presidents Day.

★ **21** — Public Health Volunteer Opportunities for Health Care Providers (see information on page 1).

★ **21** — Distinguished Lecture in the Neurosciences, **4 p.m.**, Medical School Building, Room 3.001. Fred Gage, Ph.D., speaks on "Regulation of Neurogenesis in Adult Mammalian Brain." Gage is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Among his many notable awards are the Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievements in Health and Education and the Christopher Reeve Research Medal.

★ **22** — "Taking Care of Katrina's Refugees: Five Short Films" created and produced by UT medical students who interviewed UT faculty who volunteered at the Astrodome and the George R. Brown Convention Center, **noon**, Medical School Building, Room 2.006. Lunch provided for first 75 attendees.

★ **22** — Psychiatry Seminar, "Update on Treating Depression in Children and Adolescents: Thinking Outside the Black Box" by Andrew Harper, M.D., Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral

Sciences, **11 a.m.**, Mental Sciences Institute Auditorium.

★ **24** — Nursing Research Seminar Series, "An Intervention for Stroke Survivors and Their Spouses: Preliminary Findings" by Sharon Ostwald, Ph.D., holder of the Isla Carroll Turner Chair in Gerontological Nursing, and professor, Center on Aging, Nursing Systems, Gerontology Division, **noon**, School of Nursing and Student Community Center, Room 508. Contact: (713) 500-2037.

March

★ **11** — Living with Multiple Sclerosis: Long Term Therapy & Clinical Care, Fourth Annual Patient and Family Education Day, (**8 a.m., check-in; 9 a.m.**, free program and breakfast), Houston Marriott Westchase Hotel (formerly the Adams Mark Hotel), 2900 Briarpark Dr. (free parking available). **R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, March 8**, to Shared Solutions, 1-800-887-8100, pressing "3" to register for a locally sponsored educational program.

Speakers from the Medical School's Multiple Sclerosis Research Group include: Jerry S. Wolinsky, M.D., Bartels Family and Opal C. Rankin Professor of Neurology and research group director; J. William Lindsey, M.D., associate professor of Neurology; Staley A. Brod, M.D., professor of Neurology; Flavia Nelson, M.D., assistant professor of Neurology.

Taking a Chance on Gambling

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of Texas System, the health science center and their departments. In addition, since this type of gambling is a violation of the Texas Penal Code, students also are warned against taking part in this type of criminal activity on campus. If you have any questions, call OLAIC, (713) 500-3294; the Compliance Hotline (1-888-472-9868); e-mail compliance@uth.tmc.edu; or visit the confidential "Web Reporting" site, at <http://www.tnwinc.com/webreport>.



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DEADLINES

Submit information to be considered for publication in *The Leader* by the 15th of the month one month prior to the desired time of publication. Requests for feature articles require a longer lead time and will receive strategic consideration. Send electronic information in Word format (*no PDFs or posters*) and digital photos as unedited, high-resolution images at 300 dpi or better. E-mail to Pamela.Lewis@uth.tmc.edu. Include a contact name, phone number and e-mail address. Mail hard copy to *The Leader*, c/o Pamela Lewis, Office of Public Affairs, University Center Tower, 1200, or fax to (713) 500-3037. For information regarding *The Leader*, call Pamela Lewis at (713) 500-3040.

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