



# Howell Highlights

A Quarterly Publication by the Doris A. Howell Foundation for Women's Health Research

## FIVE NEW HOWELL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The Howell Foundation will be supporting five exceptional students at UCSD next year, and three of the students will be studying mechanisms that relate to cancer and metastasis. In cancerous cells, the normal production of proteins is disrupted, and some proteins are synthesized at abnormal levels. Identifying and studying such proteins may lead to a better understanding of cancer, and these proteins may be good therapeutic targets.

One of our students, Michael Yu, a senior Bioengineering major, will use a cutting edge technology called microarray to identify new genes that are up-regulated in breast cancer cells that are highly invasive or metastatic. Melody Xi, a sophomore Biochemistry and Cell Biology major, will study how lung cancer cells move from the lung to other tissues. Her main focus will be on proteins that attach to cancer cells and the role of parathyroid hormone in lung cancer cell metastasis. Finally, Wendy Fong, a junior Biochemistry and Cell Biology major, will investigate the molecular effects of a specific protein called Twist1 that is suspected to play a crucial role in metastasis.

Intervertebral disc degeneration, and the back pain and loss of mobility it causes, are conditions that affect many women, especially as they age. Ling Xu, a junior Bioengineering major, will use a new technique called nanotomography to determine how nutrients that are essential for disc health are delivered to the discs, and how aging affects this process.

Last but not least, Lacey Lindeman, a junior Human Biology major, will investigate the role of a gene called c-jun in mediating the effects of gonadotropin releasing hormone, which controls the production of follicle stimulating and luteinizing hormones. All of these hormones are essential for reproductive fitness, and a better understanding of the molecular processes they induce may help in treating reproductive disorders.

Each student will receive \$3,000 toward their academic expenses and will work with a UCSD faculty mentor who will direct them in completing their laboratory research project. Congratulations to these five exceptional Howell Scholars!

Mandy Butler, Ph.D.  
Chair, Howell Foundation Grants Committee

### Inside this Issue

- > Recent Luncheon Speaker
- > New Howell Circle Members
- > Honorary Luncheon Hostess
- > Howell Scholar Alumni News
- > Conversation with Dr. Howell
- > Upcoming Events

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Doris A. Howell Foundation for Women's Health Research is to fund undergraduate scientists in their relevant research and to educate women to be catalysts for better family health.

To make a donation, please call (858) 454-7797.

### CONTACT US

7514 Girard Ave.

1 PMB 320

La Jolla, CA 92037

Phone: 858-454-7797

Fax: 858-454-7797

E-mail: [admin@howellfoundation.org](mailto:admin@howellfoundation.org)

Website: [www.howellfoundation.org](http://www.howellfoundation.org)

### New Howell Circle Members

Thank you to all new and renewing Howell Circle members. Your support encourages undergraduates to pursue independent research.

**Brad Benter**

**Barbara Brown**

**Ann Carmel**

**Joan Fisher**

**Pamela Foley**

**Jeanne Jones**

**Muriel Juster**

**Rae Merhar**

**Estelle Milch**

**Patricia Moises**

**Julie Potiker**

Although it takes all levels of giving to make our Foundation successful, those who contribute \$125 or more in a given year are extended membership in the Howell Circle.

You will have the satisfaction of knowing that your gift will make a positive impact on the health and well being of women, today and in the long-term.

Please use the enclosed envelope to join or renew your Howell Circle membership – or to make a tax-deductible gift in support of Howell Research Grants awarded to undergraduate students researching women’s health issues.

## May Howell Luncheon Speaker

**ADVANCES IN PALLIATIVE CARE—DORIS A. HOWELL, M.D.**

**By Ruth S. Jacobowitz**

The May 28th Health Education Series Luncheon featured Doris A. Howell, M.D. who discussed “Advances in Palliative Care.” Dr. Howell’s first effort in her important talk was to make sure that the large audience understood the definition of palliative care. In her frank and fresh way we all learned that palliative means to remove symptoms and to free the patient from fear and pain. When it first began, palliative care adopted the principals of hospice care and then in the 1990s, Doris Howell along with other leaders in the field convinced Medicare to transfer care for a patient with approximately six months left to live to a new Hospice Medicare and also to drop the six month time limitation. Now, physicians can refer patients for palliative care, the linchpin for which is dedicated interdisciplinary care. The significant change from vertical control to shared horizontal care is critical for success as often support staff and other caregivers are more attuned to the patient’s needs, wishes and fears than those who stand at the top of the vertical care ladder. It is interesting to note that the Moore’s Cancer Center at UCSD, which is staffed by San Diego Hospice Palliative care personnel, was the first academic palliative care program in the United States. It started in 2007. There are thirteen hospices in our community and when looking for the appropriate one for a patient, it is important to inquire if it is for profit or not-for-profit. It is also important to know that a newly provided Emergency Service can offer 24-hour home care during the final days of life. It is vital that we each understand what palliative care and services are available before we need them and provide support for these programs. With our support we can help the programs comfort the patient, ease the angst and grief of the families and help control the excessive costs of medical care for the terminally ill.

## May Luncheon Hostess



Dr. Howell and Libby Carson

We were very thankful to have Libby Carson serve as our Honorary Luncheon Hostess at our May 28th luncheon at the La Jolla Country Club. Libby has been a consistent member of the Howell Circle since 2002 and has helped the Howell Foundation with our efforts to increase visibility in the community. Thank you to Libby for helping to make the event a huge success and for continuing to support our mission!

## Meet the Howell Scholars



Lee Wang (scholar), Scholarship Donor Barbara Bollinger and Rachel Poythress (scholar)

If you’ve attended a recent luncheon you know what a pleasure it is to meet and hear from our current Howell Scholars. Each luncheon, we invite 2-3 scholars to come and meet our members, thank their scholarship donors in person and update us on their research. RSVP early for the August 13th luncheon (info on page 4) in order to meet our next round of Howell Scholars!

## A Conversation with Dr. Howell...

Frequently I am asked why we concentrate our grant-giving to undergraduate college students when we could be assured of more practical results if we funded graduate students. That is an excellent question that deserves a thoughtful answer.

By encouraging undergraduate students to apply for research grants, we hope to first spark their interest in research as a career and secondly to encourage that flame of intellectual curiosity in young people to burn more vigorously. The young person seeking education evidences a curiosity untrammelled by the dicta of educational courses fixed in their content. These young people tend to ask, not just "Why?", but "Why not?". They are willing to experiment, to accept the challenges of proving their ideas, and above all satisfy their curiosity to the answer of why and/or why not.

We are fortunate to have in San Diego, college faculty in fine universities who are interested in young people, their own disciplines and their research. By their willingness to serve as mentors to the applicants for our grants, they amplify substantially the quality of education, the character of their students, and the integrity of the research. The Howell Foundation is appreciative of what they do and is grateful for their support.

We have been highlighting the follow-up studies of our research scholars. It is obvious that the Howell grants have influenced the future careers and work of the successful applicants. Many times, the fruits of their basic research became an important part of their careers, and, in some instances, was used by other researchers as the foundation of further work in that field.

Scientific research does not always result in immediate practical results. Often it serves to provide a foundation or pathway to other research which, in turn, opens new avenues which lead to new knowledge and better science. That is a reward in itself. But our Howell grants have a lasting effect on the grant scholars' thinking as well as their careers. That is priceless.

*Doris A. Howell, M.D.*



## Howell Scholar Alumni News

In March 2009 we sent out 70 requests to various faculty for follow-up data about the scholars they had mentored. As of April 2009 we received 35 responses. Many of the scholars went on to graduate work: Master's degree programs, Nursing School, Medical School, and/or Ph.D. degree programs. Kristina Cook, a 2004 Howell Scholar, is highlighted below. In subsequent newsletters, several more scholars will be featured.

Kristina Cook, who received her grant in 2004, is a Ph.D. student at NIH/Oxford program and expects to graduate in December 2009. She has published several papers on the HIF protein (the subject of her grant project) and its role in cancer, having made several important breakthroughs on this work. Recently she gave a presentation to 600 scientists at the American Cancer Research Symposium.

## The Doris A. Howell Foundation for Women's Health Research Board of Directors

### OFFICERS

**Doris A. Howell, M.D.**  
Honorary Chair

**Pattie Wellborn**  
Board Chair

**Linda G. Osborne, CPA**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Gladys Kohn**  
Treasurer

**Peggy R. Dechsle**  
Secretary

### DIRECTORS

**Carole Banka, Ph.D.**

**Brad Benter**

**Betty Brays Shay**

**Madeline Butler, Ph.D.**

**Cher Conner**

**Patti Coopridger**

**Judy Hodges**

**Kathleen A. Franklin**

**Carlene Gibbons, R.N.**

**Skai Krisans, Ph.D.**

**Jean Lunsford**

**Jean Kauth McGrath, CHMB**

**Priscilla Moxley**

**Kay Christian Pierce**

**Beatrice K. Rose, M.D.**

**Cheryl A. Wilson, R.N., M.A.**

♥ Thank you to contributing editors Beatrice K. Rose, M.D. and Ruth S. Jacobowitz.

**The Doris A. Howell Foundation  
for Women's Health Research Presents...**

**UPCOMING LUNCHEON!**

**August 13, 2009**

**12:00 noon (11:30 registration)**

**La Jolla Country Club**

**\$45 for Howell Circle Members**

**\$55 for Prospective members /guests**



Edward Ross, M.D.

**"What's New in Laser Surgery for the Skin?"**

Dr. Ross will present the latest advances in laser dermatology. His lecture will cover topics such as laser for skin cancer, wrinkles, and wound healing. As part of his lecture, Dr. Ross will focus on before-and-after photographs and videos.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**October 29, 2009**

**"Nutrient Supplementation:  
Misconceptions and Realities"**

Mark Kern, Ph.D., R.D., is a Professor of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences at SDSU and is a Registered Dietitian. Dr. Kern will discuss the pros and cons of dietary supplementation and will dispel some of the myths regarding certain supplements.



Mark Kern, Ph.D., R.D.

**Would you like to sponsor a Howell Scholar's lunch for \$45? Let us know when you make your reservation at (858) 454-7797.**

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 3814  
San Diego, CA

**Doris A. Howell  
Foundation for  
Women's Health  
Research, Inc.**  
7514 Girard Avenue  
1 PMB 320  
La Jolla, CA 92037

