

MED STUDENTS GRADUATE

Students told to look after their communities

By Nancy Treacy
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M University Health Science Center College of Medicine graduated 47 physicians Saturday.

Dr. Richard DeVaul, vice president for Health Affairs and dean of the College of Medicine, opened the ceremony by praising those involved in "providing a quality education to the graduates."

DeVaul stressed the importance of the public trust in medicine and told the graduates they are responsible to look after the health and well-being of the community they live in.

Dr. Donald Seldin, University of Texas Systems professor of internal medicine, told the graduates that health care reform and biomedical science will dramatically alter today's medical field.

"The revolution in health care will affect everyone, not only physicians," he said.

Seldin, founding chairman of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School's Department of Medicine, spoke to the graduates about the unsettling times that medicine faces.

"Something will have to be done to rein in costs and assure access to health care," he said.

Seldin said he is disappointed in the health care system and told the graduates to make sure care of the elderly is conducted in a dignified manner.

He noted that society thinks of physicians in a "priestly" manner because they have the power to heal the sick.

"This belief is critical because understanding and trust are the core of a noble medical profession," he said.

"Plunge into medicine," he said. "It deserves to be enjoyed because it is noble and one can contribute broadly to society."

Kathleen Ann Jones of Houston received the Helen Salyer Anderson Award, which is given to an outstanding senior with the highest academic achievement.

The award was established in 1980 by physician Dr. Frank G. Anderson Jr. in honor of his mother, Helen Salyer Anderson.

After the graduates were awarded their degrees, Dr. Daniel Blake Morehead, Class of '94, told his classmates the reason for becoming a physician was to help people.

"Reflect on who we are and how we can help others," he said.

To conclude the commencement, the 47 new physicians were administered their Hippocratic oath by Dr. Charles J. Foulks, professor of internal medicine.



Stew Milne/THE BATTALION

Hangover?

This furry, frisky fellow frolics around campus after a hectic first week of summer classes.

Worshippers flock to Egyptian monument

ABU MINA, Egypt (AP) — The German archaeologist Peter Grossmann has spent 30 years trying to unravel the story of one of early Christianity's great pilgrimage centers, Abu Mina, a city of miracles 1,400 years before France's Lourdes.

Early pilgrims came here to pray at the grave of Menas, a fourth-century Christian martyr beheaded by Egypt's Roman occupiers. Said to be a place of miracles, the grave became the cornerstone of a vast religious complex, Egypt's most acclaimed.

Grossmann, of Cairo's German Archaeological Institute, has studied early Christian sites throughout the Middle East. Abu Mina is historically special for two reasons:

—Few relics survive in Egypt from the fourth to the sixth centuries, after Roman persecution ended and Christianity was legalized.

—Unlike most early Christian monuments, altered repeatedly over the centuries, Abu Mina retains much of the feeling of old.

Cairo's ancient churches, some said to have provided sanctuary for Mary, Joseph and Jesus as they fled from Herod's wrath in Judea, have been rebuilt so many times that nothing exists of the original. What's seen today is medieval, not early Christian.

Some of Abu Mina's remains survive amazingly intact, giving archaeologists a chance to study in detail a period when dramatic change swept the Mediterranean.

Abu Mina's historical significance was underscored in 1979 by UNESCO, the main U.N. cultural agency, which placed the pilgrimage center on its world heritage list. Only five of Egypt's thousands of antiquity sites share the distinction.



Stew Milne/THE BATTALION

Jennifer Susan Johnson from Boerne graduated from the College of Medicine on Saturday. Johnson will start her residency in psychiatry at the University of Arkansas for Medical Science.

Castration issue gets another look

HOUSTON (AP) — A few Texas conservatives are quietly re-
viewing the issue of castrating some violent criminals, three years after the issue caused an uproar in Houston.

The subject stirred controversy in 1991 when State District Judge Michael McSpadden granted a black man's request to be castrated in exchange for a probation sentence.

The case sparked an outcry from some activists, and McSpadden withdrew his approval when a doctor could not be found to perform the procedure.

Now, a few Texas conservatives are embracing a more temperate approach.

Led by Republican state Sen. Teel Bivins of Amarillo, they are pushing castration as optional therapy, not punishment, for imprisoned child molesters. The Houston Post reported Sunday.

Texas prison officials currently refuse to permit surgical or chemical castration of inmates, but Bivins plans to introduce a bill in January that would let inmate child molesters volunteer to be surgically castrated at state expense.

At last count, 7,856 men were serving time for sex crimes in Texas penitentiaries at a cost of more than \$350,000 a day.

Dr. Louis Girard, a Houston surgeon, noted that white sex offenders outnumber blacks in the Texas prison system (42.1 percent to 33.7 percent). The disparity is even greater among those who sexually abused children: 49.1 percent are white compared to 23.4 percent black.

Amerasians face hardships of assimilation, bureaucracy

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (AP) — They were the lonely outcasts, children considered no better than dirt, the spoils of battle. Born of American fathers and Vietnamese mothers, these Amerasians have now grown into young men and women, survivors older than the war that bred them.

Many were exploited, sold from one Vietnamese family to another, trapped by bureaucratic red tape, victims of the political and economic wars between Vietnam and the United States that followed the end of the fighting in 1975. And indifference.

The majority were in their teens or older when they finally realized their dream of going to the United States to get an education or perhaps meet their biological fathers.

Most have not done well in America, never able to quite escape the discrimination that dogs them wherever they go.

"I do think they have trouble fitting into either Vietnamese society or American society," says Tim McCully of InterAction, a Washington-based umbrella group for almost all refugee resettlement agencies in the United States. "They see themselves as straddling that line and I'm sure that elements of racism come in from both sides."

No one is sure how many Amerasians the war spawned. According to the latest figures from the U.S. State Department, about 20,000 Amerasians have gone to the United

States since the war ended. Of that number, about three-fourths of them made it out of Vietnam in the past five years, after passage of the Amerasian Homecoming Act, and during Vietnam's emergence from isolation and its improved relations with the United States.

No one is sure either how many remain in Vietnam. Estimates range from 1,000 to 5,000. While most agree that the vast majority have already left, some will never leave.

"It's a pity they were left there in the first place to languish," says Dewey Pendergass, an official in the U.S. State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs. "We can't do anything about that now, but we're trying to make things as right as we can."

The State Department has begun a new program to have the Amerasians apply directly to U.S. officials either in Ho Chi Minh City or in Bangkok, Thailand, for passage to the United States instead of going through the Vietnamese authorities.

About 300 of the remaining Amerasians and their families live at the Amerasian Transit Center in Ho Chi Minh City, which plans to close in about a year. Others are thought to be scattered across Vietnam.

Some of the American fathers accepted their children, even years after the war ended and they finally caught up to each other. Some knew they had children in Vietnam,

but abandoned them for the American families they returned to back home. When some of the Amerasian children finally did make it to America on their own, they were rejected again.

Some of the fathers were married and wanted to keep the secret from their wives. Others never knew for sure they had a child because they left before the child was born or the mother never told them.

Sitting at the Amerasian Transit Center in Ho Chi Minh City, Tran Viet Truc weeps shell-shocked, a pathetic young man. He says his father was an American and his features seem to bear this out.

A woman who says she is his grandmother is pleading his case. Vo Thi Nhat, 69, says she has to sell vegetables and potatoes in the market to support him. Tran Viet Truc was stricken with high fever when he was 19 and for a time it was thought he might never recover. It left him tongue-tied. But he slowly recovered, even enough to help his grandmother in the fields.

"Since early childhood, I raised him," says the grandmother. "I cried days and nights. Now I am very old. I have to go out in the field to search for wild seeds to plant in the rice fields. I'm too old to feed him now and just wish there was some way for him to go."

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