

WAYS & MEANS

METHODIST REHABILITATION CENTER | WINTER 2017



THE NEW LOOK FOR
SPINAL CORD
INJURY CARE



Now I can...

be a go-getter grandmother

After being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Sheri Carter wanted a means to maintain her active lifestyle. And the quest led her to LSVT Big & Loud Therapy at Methodist Outpatient Neurological Rehabilitation in Flowood.

The innovative program uses speech and physical therapies to improve voice strength, walking speed, muscle tone, balance and trunk control. And the former Pearl High School teacher gives the approach an A-plus.

Now, she's agile enough to play on the floor with her "grand-blessing," teach a senior exercise class and attend a therapeutic dance course.

"Exercise is so important for me to be able to function," she said. "Once I met the therapists at Methodist, I was convinced it was the place to be. They were very encouraging. And it helped me tremendously."



Earl R. Wilson, Founding Chairman
METHODIST
REHABILITATION CENTER

**NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR REHAB
AFTER A STROKE, SPINAL CORD INJURY, BRAIN INJURY OR AMPUTATION.**
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FROM THE CEO

When your organization turns 40, like Methodist Rehabilitation Center did last year, you celebrate. You reflect on where you started and on how far you've come. You recognize those that supported and sustained you through growth and change.

It is tempting to accept that more of the same will lead to even greater accomplishments. But, we know that's not always true. We must continually push ourselves out of our comfort zone and investigate new ideas that show promise, even as we've just grown comfortable with the outcome of our last exploration. Innovation and discovery in treating neurological diseases and injuries are happening around the world at this very moment. MRC is organized and staffed to look for and participate in that innovation and discovery. Our experienced researchers and clinicians know how to identify what works and what doesn't in rehabilitation medicine.

Nineteen years ago, we established the Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery after a planning process that took over 14 months to complete. An administrative director for research was appointed. As a dedicated full-time M.D. scientist, he was given a seat on the MRC Board alongside the Medical Staff President. This gave credence to our commitment to have research drive clinical innovation. Five years later, we were positioned to make our first notable discovery related to the West Nile Virus outbreak in Mississippi. Since then, more research papers were published in respected journals, and our work began to be cited by other researchers around the world.

In 2014, after several years of careful planning and negotiation, we entered into an affiliation with the University of Mississippi Medical Center. As a result, the Neuro Institute at UMMC was established with MRC as a strategic partner. This affiliation agreement with UMMC has set the stage for the next notable accomplishments at MRC, and is already working as planned. In this issue, you will learn about how that partnership attracted one of the top neurotrauma research scientists in the country to Jackson, Miss.

You will also read about our investment in the expansion of our Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery, effectively doubling the size of the research space and adding new research equipment and opportunity. We have also completed a remodel of two of our patient floors in order to provide the best in care and comfort with innovative design to aid in the patient's recovery.

You will meet our newest admitting physicians, many of whom now have faculty positions at UMMC. This will help ensure the realization of our plan to assist in teaching and training the next generation of physiatrists (rehabilitation physicians) for MRC and Mississippi – right here in Mississippi.

You will see our investment in care beyond inpatient rehabilitation, as we move toward opening a new 12,300-square-foot outpatient facility in Ridgeland that will provide therapies not found anywhere else in the state.

You will see through our regular features like "Now I Can" and "Where Are They Now?" that we are still committed to the people we cared for when they first needed us, and strive to ensure that we continue to provide the latest innovative services that keep them healthy and able to enjoy life to the fullest extent possible.

We have great pride in where we've been and what we've accomplished thus far, and have now laid the groundwork for much greater achievements in rehabilitation medicine. We are truly committed to our mission of excellence in restoring and enhancing the lives of those we serve. You can only achieve excellence by challenging yourself never to be satisfied that you are "good enough." So we challenge ourselves every day to get better because our patients and community deserve our best. 🌱



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Adams".

*President and Chief Executive Officer
Methodist Rehabilitation Center*

WAYS & MEANS

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In response to the love of God, Methodist Rehabilitation Center is dedicated to the restoration and enhancement of the lives of those we serve. We are committed to excellence and leadership in the delivery of comprehensive services.

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Methodist Rehabilitation Center provides comprehensive medical rehabilitation programs for people with spinal cord and brain injuries, stroke and other neurological and orthopedic disorders. The 124-bed state-of-the-art hospital in Jackson has twice been designated a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Model System site by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and is also the only hospital in Mississippi twice named one of America's best by U.S. News & World Report.

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News Briefs

Four MRC therapists now certified Assistive Technology Professionals

Three more Methodist Rehabilitation Center physical therapists recently received their Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) certification from the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA).

The ATP certification recognizes demonstrated competence in analyzing the needs of consumers with disabilities, assisting in the selection of appropriate assistive technology for the consumers' needs, and providing training in the use of the selected devices, according to RESNA.

Christopher McGuffey of Madison serves patients of the spinal cord injury program at MRC's main hospital in Jackson. He received his physical therapy degree from the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Medicine.

Cameron Huff of Jackson and Heather Maloney of Madison currently serve patients at MRC's Assistive Technology Clinic, which is located at the hospital's outpatient services facility in Flowood. Both received their physical therapy degree from UMMC.

Erin Bischofberger of Madison, therapy manager of the Assistive Technology Clinic, has been ATP certified since 2012.

Bischofberger is also the state's only Seating and Mobility Specialist (SMS) certified physical therapist working in a clinical setting.

This certification, also provided by RESNA, recognizes demonstrated competence in seating and mobility assessment, funding resources, implementation of intervention, and outcome assessment and follow-up.

MRC's Assistive Technology Clinic offers seating and wheeled mobility solutions designed to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities. For more information, call 601-936-8838 or visit www.methodistonline.org/assistive-technology-clinic.



McGuffey



Huff



Maloney



Bischofberger

MRC therapist receives Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist certification

Methodist Rehabilitation Center occupational therapist Ashlee Ricotta of Brandon recently received her Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) certification from the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED).

The CDRS certification recognizes individuals who have significant work experience in the field of driver rehabilitation, have maintained their education in the field and have passed a written examination.

There are only about 350 active Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialists currently working in the U.S. and Canada, and Ricotta is currently only one of three CDRS in the state of Mississippi. She also represents the state on ADED's national committee.

Ricotta has served as an occupational therapist at MRC's Outpatient Rehabilitation facility in Flowood since 2003, and has 12 years experience in driver rehabilitation. Ricotta received her occupational therapy degree from the University of Mississippi Medical Center.



Ricotta

Weems named chairman of board of trustees at MRC

Walter S. Weems of Brunini, Grantham, Grower & Hewes, PLLC, in Jackson has been named chairman of the board of trustees for Methodist Rehabilitation Center.

At Brunini, Weems serves as principal outside counsel for both traditional corporations and a number of entrepreneurs. His practice areas include corporate law, mergers and acquisitions and real estate. He was chairman of Brunini's board of directors from 1999 to 2010.

Weems is a magna cum laude graduate of Vanderbilt University and an honors graduate of Vanderbilt Law School.

A Jackson resident, Weems also currently serves as a member of the board of Jackson Heart Foundation.

He has served on MRC's board since 2002, most recently as treasurer.



Weems

Longtime MRC patron and life member of board dies

Sally Carmichael, a life member of the Methodist Rehabilitation Center Board of Trustees and Wilson Research Foundation, died Oct. 29. From the time Sally and her late husband Charles established their roots in Jackson, she invested countless hours over nearly seven decades to make her community a better place.



Sally was involved with MRC from the early years and remained active until recently. Hospital scrapbooks from 1977 contain clippings of Sally co-chairing fashion shows and bake sales with her friend Martha Wilson to raise funds for MRC. When the Wilson Foundation was created in 1989, Sally was named a founding board member and remained a passionate supporter through the years. ♡

Three new members appointed to Wilson Foundation board

Methodist Rehabilitation Center has appointed three new members to the Board of Governors of the center's Wilson Research Foundation.

Tish Hughes of Jackson recently retired from Trustmark National Bank. She is concurrently a member of the MRC Board of Trustees.



Cy Rosenblatt of Jackson serves on the faculty of Hinds Community College in Rankin County, and previously on the faculty of the University of Mississippi's Department of Political Science in Oxford.



T. Calvin Wells of Jackson is an attorney and partner with Phelps Dunbar.

He practices in the area of business, focusing his transactional practice on general business counseling, contracts and negotiation, complex commercial financing and acquisitions. He also practices in the area of sports law. ♡



O&P named Small Business of the Year by Rankin Chamber

On Sept. 27, Methodist Orthotics & Prosthetics was recognized as Small Business of the Year at the Rankin County Chamber of Commerce annual banquet luncheon.



"We are very honored," said Chris Wallace, director of Methodist O&P, pictured above accepting the award with MRC vice president of human resources Steve Hope. "This award is a testimony to the hard work of our staff and the compassion and energy they have to serve the people of Mississippi who are in need of our services." ♡

Outpatient Rehab selected for multiple sclerosis study

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) in Washington, D.C. has chosen Methodist Outpatient Rehabilitation Clinic in Flowood to participate in a \$5.8 million multiple sclerosis (MS) study.

Led by a research team at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the trial will compare the benefits of clinic-based MS therapy to an exercise rehabilitation program delivered via the internet or telephone.

The study is one of four addressing MS therapies being underwritten by nearly \$20 million in PCORI funding.

"PCORI is delighted to make these new awards addressing crucial evidence gaps and questions of vital interest to the more than 400,000 people in the U.S. living with multiple sclerosis," said PCORI Executive Director Joe Selby, M.D., MPH. "These studies will provide significant new evidence to help patients, their families and their clinicians decide more confidently which of the therapies available to them will work best given their needs and preferences."

"These PCORI awards are a welcome and much-needed infusion of new MS research funding for important real-world questions about treatment strategies and their effectiveness," said Bruce Bebo, Ph.D., Executive Vice President, Research at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. "The projects should provide important evidence for the best ways to address troubling symptoms like fatigue, and the potential for using technology to deliver needed rehabilitation approaches to people in remote areas."

Study participants are being recruited in Mississippi and Alabama. For more information, contact Tracy Fleming at 205-704-8248 or tracy@alaneuro.com. ♡

Employees of the Year



Teresa Thompson
Support Services



Ann Howard
Clinical Services



Virgie Jackson
Specialty Care Center

TERESA THOMPSON

Teresa Thompson says divine guidance brought her to Methodist Rehabilitation Center some 16 years ago.

"I tell people all the time, it wasn't anybody but God," said the most recent recipient of MRC's Support Services Employee of the Year award. "I wasn't looking for a job, and I had not worked in the medical field before.

"But a friend who worked at MRC called me out of the blue and said: 'We've got a position up here, send me your resume.' I sent the resume and that's how I started."

Thompson calls her hiring as an admissions coordinator "a blessing." But it's MRC that has been blessed by Thompson's welcoming nature.

"Teresa is professional, courteous and always willing to cheerfully assist our patients and their families," said MRC Controller David Guzman. "She provides them with a very positive first impression of Methodist Rehab."

MRC's admissions staff stays busy taking referrals, verifying and pre-certifying insurance and admitting patients to the hospital and registering others for outpatient visits.

For every phone call they field—and there are "tons," "you've got five things you do for each person," Thompson said.

And she admits it took some time to adjust to the job.

"When I first started working here, it was a humbling experience," she said. "I didn't know how many people are disabled. And it made me stop and think about people who have had strokes and brain and spinal cord injuries. It was a real eye-opener."

Mainly, it brought home the importance of connecting potential patients with MRC's unparalleled expertise.

"I love the excitement when patients know they've been accepted," Thompson said. "People want to come to Methodist Rehab because they want to get better. I like knowing I have done something to brighten someone's day or that I have been helpful. Some patients don't have family, and I've even gone shopping for some."

Despite her above-and-beyond attitude, Thompson says she had no inkling she would be selected as an Employee of the Year.

"I was in shock. I didn't even get up at first. My husband had to say: 'Teresa, they called your name.' It was a pleasant surprise."

And Thompson would be the first to say her career cup runneth over.

"So many people come through that touch me," she said. "When they come

back walking and talking, it's a blessing to see that. I love the patients and what I do." ❧

ANN HOWARD

Although she was in the running for Clinical Employee of the Year, physical therapist Ann Howard could have been excused for missing Methodist Rehabilitation Center's annual employee recognition banquet.

She gave birth to her second child just two weeks before the big night.

But as is her nature, Howard didn't want to disappoint. And that reliability factor is one reason she ended the evening as the award winner, said MRC Therapy Director Suzy Gonzales.

"Ann is a dependable, excellent performer," Gonzales said. "She sees things that need to be done and takes initiative."

Howard did her student training at MRC, and Gonzales said she was a standout from the start. "She had a passion for giving patients the best experience at MRC," Gonzales said.

After Howard finished her training, she accepted a job offer from Gonzales and began work with MRC's inpatient spinal cord injury team in September 2010.

The daughter of a doctor, Howard got interested in PT while in high school. "I hurt my shoulder while playing tennis and began seeing a physical therapist," said Howard, then a state champion singles player for Jackson Preparatory School.

At the time, she thought she'd pursue a PT job in the sports medicine arena. But Howard's focus changed once she began PT training at Belmont University in Nashville.

"I really got interested in the neurological field," Howard said. "I fell in love with the patient population and being able to help people do the things we take for granted. Things we complain about are very minor compared to what our patients go through."

The field encompasses rehab for brain and spinal cord injuries, stroke and other neurological disorders. And today Howard treats a wider variety of such patients as a PT for Methodist Outpatient Neurological Rehabilitation in Flowood.

"It's very hands-on," she said. "You're helping patients go through tough times, physically, emotionally and spiritually. You also get to have a relationship with your patients and help motivate them to get better."

"There are a lot of happy tears working with this population," she adds. "You get to see a lot of firsts—the first time they sit up, or stand or drive a wheelchair. It's meaningful. I love coming to work every day."

She also enjoys learning new approaches to aid her patients. And she recently went the extra mile to be certified as a clinical specialist in neurology by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialists.

"We are especially proud of her for the hard work she put into becoming one of but 15 Mississippi PTs to earn the certification," Gonzales said.

The process involved two four-day courses in Los Angeles and six months of weekly seminars and study sessions with coworkers. But Howard said it was well

worth the work.

"It allowed me to take hundreds of hours of continuing education that contributed to my professional growth," she said. "I wouldn't be where I am today without it." ❧

VIRGIE JACKSON

It's not a confession you'd expect from Methodist Specialty Care Center's Employee of the Year.

But Virgie Jackson admits to thinking she'd made a mistake when she first joined the residential care center for people with severe disabilities.

"I came from a traditional nursing home where I was used to jolly little old people," said the administrative assistant. "They would come in my office and surround me and tell me their life stories."

"But when I got to Methodist Specialty Care, it was totally different. The residents are younger, and they have lost so much. Some were the age of my children, and it was sad. I didn't think it was the place for me."

Nine years later, it's obvious that notion didn't last for long.

Today, Jackson is proud to be a part of a center that is providing the best care possible for a unique population that includes people with paralysis and other disabling conditions such as ALS.

"I wish there were more facilities like this," she said. "Everything at Specialty Care is designed just for the residents and that is wonderful."

Jackson credits her change in attitude to meeting MSCC resident Adam Booker. Seeing the happy-go-lucky col-

lege student working on his computer convinced Jackson there could be a good life after quadriplegia.

"I went to his room and I said: 'This is amazing,'" Jackson said. "Everything was accessible to him, and he was able to love his life."

"And that's what I like about working here. I like to see the residents up and going. I know some have been through a lot. But right here they are able to regain confidence and learn how to live life again. I enjoy seeing that. Now they sit next to my office window and tell me their stories."

Libby Lampley, director of nursing at MSCC, said there's a reason Jackson is a favorite with residents and staff alike.

"She can cheer you up even on the most stressful of days" Lampley said. "She's someone you look forward to seeing at work every day."

And residents have come to count on her reliability.

"She's always helpful to the residents, takes time to answer their questions and often does little extras for them," Lampley said. "And she manages to keep a smile on her face even when multiple people are needing something from her."

A resident nominated Jackson for Employee of the Year honors. And she said it was enough just to know someone thought she was good at what she does.

Actually winning the award was "the best thing ever," Jackson said.

"That night was amazing and I really wanted to tell everyone how grateful I am and how much it means to me. It's something I will never forget." ❧

"You get to see a lot of firsts—the first time they sit up, or stand or drive a wheelchair. It's meaningful. I love coming to work every day."

— Ann Howard

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view our latest job listings at methodistonline.org/career-opportunities



Nikosha Anderson uses the van to pick up her son R.J. from school, as well as to attend classes at Jackson State University.

Driven to independence

Donation of van helps SCI patient get back on track after injury

by Carey Miller

More than two years after a paralyzing car wreck, Nikosha Anderson's life was finally coming back together. She had returned to college, her 6-year-old son was starting school and she was finishing rehab. "Everything was falling into place," the Jackson resident said.

But one piece was still missing. Like many wheelchair users, Anderson faced the daily challenge of finding transportation. It made juggling school, medical appointments and caring for her son R.J. difficult.

"Medicaid provides for some transportation, but that only takes you to doctors' appointments," Anderson said. "There's Jatan, but sometimes they don't run on time and with school you have to be on time for class. So it was an issue."

But then the final piece of the puzzle fell into place, in a most unexpected way. Thanks to a stranger's generosity, Anderson received a van that could be modified to meet her unique

needs as a paraplegic driver.

"I couldn't really believe it," she said.

An anonymous benefactor had donated the van to Methodist Rehabilitation Center and the Jackson hospital's Navigator program chose Anderson from a pool of potential recipients.

"We wanted it to go to a person who truly needed a van and was motivated to make good use of it, but might not have the financial means," said Arash Sepehri, care coordinator for the program which connects spinal cord injury patients with resources to help ease the transition from inpatient rehab to home.

Anderson, 27, had gone through inpatient and outpatient rehab at MRC and was attending the center's Quest program. Located on Lakeland Drive in Jackson, the outpatient program helps people with brain or spinal injuries make a successful return to work, school or home life.

"She has been so motivated throughout our entire pro-

gram,” said Erin Perry, Nikosha’s physical therapist at Quest. “She really deserved this.”

“She’s so motivated that she has been a motivator to all of our other patients,” added Allison Harris, her occupational therapist.

Anderson graduated from Hinds Community College last fall and is now pursuing a degree in counseling at Jackson State University. She had been attending Mississippi State University and was home for summer break when she had her accident in 2013.

“Since my injury, there were many things I wanted to do that I didn’t think I would be able to, like driving again and going back to school,” Anderson said. “Quest has helped me get back to ‘me.’ At first I was scared to go to school, but they showed me that I could do it. They’ve been a big support system for me.”

Quest referred her to MRC’s Driver Rehabilitation Program at its outpatient facility in Flowood. There, Anderson received the training necessary to drive a vehicle modified with hand controls.

“She was giddy to be able to do the things she used to do for her child,” said Ashlee Ricotta of Brandon, a certified driver rehabilitation specialist at MRC. “After her injury, she had to rely on her mother to give her rides and help out with caring for R.J.”

“Now I can do more for myself,” Anderson said. “I get to take my baby to school in the morning and pick him up, and he’s so happy about that. I get to take myself to class and go to my appointments.”

And not only does the van make it easier to get where she’s going, it makes it easier for her to get around once she gets there.

That’s because the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services provided funding to modify the van to accommodate Anderson’s power wheelchair. Before, she had to use a manual wheelchair because it fit in her mother’s car.

But now she can roll her power wheelchair up a ramp into the van. Once inside, she has the option of driving the van from her wheelchair or transferring to the driver’s seat.

Anderson had to meet certain criteria to qualify for the MDRS funding.

“They’re required to have their own vehicle, which must meet certain specifications,” Harris said. “It has to be under 30,000 miles and less than five years old, for example. Then the modifications are paid for by MDRS’ Office of Special Disability Programs or Vocational Rehab, or a combination of both, as it was in Nikosha’s case.”

Anderson had been looking into getting a van, but it would have been a financial hardship.

“For many people getting that new of a vehicle can be hard,” Harris said.



Nikosha Anderson walks with the help of MRC's overhead lift system. She is assisted by, at left, Quest physical therapist Erin Perry and physical therapy student Amy Vitell.

“So this has been huge,” Perry said. “And a huge step toward her independence. It just makes life a lot easier.”

Not just for her but also her mother, Anderson says.

“It’s given her a much-needed break from these past two years, when everything just changed,” she said. “She gets to sleep a little later, so she’s loving it!”

Anderson also gave back to Quest and got valuable work experience by serving as a volunteer at the clinic doing clerical work.

“She did whatever we needed her to do, with a big smile on her face,” Harris said.

Anderson is now a graduate of the Quest program, but continues to see Perry for physical therapy. She also continues her road to independence—she will soon move into her own place with her son.

“I feel like I’m more myself than what I used to be,” she said. ♡

“Since my injury, there were many things I wanted to do that I didn’t think I would be able to, like driving again and going back to school. Quest has helped me get back to ‘me.’” — **Nikosha Anderson**



Artist's rendering of the Ridgeland outpatient clinic.

Going Olde Towne

MRC breaks ground on new outpatient clinic in Ridgeland

by Susan Christensen

It will be 2017 before Methodist Rehabilitation Center finishes its new outpatient clinic in Ridgeland.

But guests at a groundbreaking ceremony in May still got a glimpse of one of the clinic's best features. The Olde Towne site overlooks the natural beauty of the Natchez Trace and the city's popular multi-use trail.

"The trail is an incredible resource for Ridgeland and it will be a resource for our patients, too," said MRC CEO Mark Adams. "They'll be able to see out the windows of the therapy gym and be motivated by the people on the trail."

"And we will definitely be incorporating the outdoors into therapy," said Joe Jacobson, director of outpatient services at MRC.

Inside the 12,300-square-foot clinic, patients will find a space designed to encourage recovery from a variety of injuries and illnesses.

"Everybody knows MRC has expertise in stroke, brain and spinal cord injury rehabilitation," Jacobson said. "But we also treat everything from simple sprains and strains to more complex orthopedic and neurological conditions."

The clinic also will be home to MRC's outpatient Quest program, which helps people with brain or spinal cord injuries make a successful return to work, school or community life.

Both Quest in Jackson and MRC's outpatient clinic on Highway 51 in Ridgeland occupy leased space. Adams said putting down roots in Ridgeland was a sensible way to house those programs in one place and ensure room for expansion.

"Four years ago, Chief Operating Officer Joe Morette and I began looking for a location," Adams said. "We came through the Olde Towne area and said we would like to be here."

Finding the right spot took time, but Adams said it was worth the wait for the 3-acre property that stretches from Perkins to Maple Street.

Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee said he was grateful that MRC chose to invest in the city.

"It's exciting to have Methodist Rehab be part of our growing downtown," he said.

Bike Crossing owners Robert and Linda Bartley also like having MRC among their neighbors in Olde Towne.

Robert underwent stroke therapy at MRC in 2013. And since 2014, the Bartleys have made MRC the beneficiary of their store's annual 100 Miles of Mayhem charity bike ride.

And Linda said she enjoys working with MRC staff on what has become a valuable collaboration.

"Ever since 2014, we've had good turnout and the ride has gotten bigger and bigger for us," she said. ♡

"It's exciting to have Methodist Rehab be part of our growing downtown."
— Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee

CLINIC FEATURES

- A large therapy gym furnished with the latest in therapeutic equipment, such as the metro area's only AlterG Anti-Gravity Treadmill available to the general public
- A SwimEx resistance swimming pool, equipped with variable speed current and integrated motorized treadmill
- A full-size kitchen where patients can practice independent living skills
- Access to a variety of specialized services, such as Lee Silverman Big and Loud therapy for Parkinson's, Schroth therapy for scoliosis, vestibular treatments for balance disorders and driver rehabilitation training



Construction is already well under way at the clinic's Olde Towne location.



MRC CEO Mark Adams detailed the vision for the clinic at the groundbreaking ceremony in May.



On hand for the groundbreaking were, from left, the Rev. Rusty White, Ridgeland Alderman Ken Heard, Ridgeland Chamber President John Dorsa, Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee, MRC CEO Mark Adams, MRC board member Matt Holleman, MRC board chairman Walter Weems, Bike Crossing owner Linda Bartley, Wilson Foundation vice chairman Sam Lane, Sr., MRC board life member Dean Miller and MRC COO Joe Morette.

A yarn for yarn

MSCC resident learns to crochet with guidance of volunteer

by Carey Miller

Most people may have never heard of polymyositis, a rare inflammatory disease that causes muscle weakness throughout the body.

Shonda Brown certainly hadn't when she was diagnosed with it at the age of 14.

"It just came out of the blue," she said. "I had never been sick—barely even had a cold. They think I got it from a viral infection, but no one knows for sure.

"They said it was rare for someone like me to get it so young. I've never met anyone else with it. I've even gone online to see if I could find anyone else that has gone through it. It's been hard."

Polymyositis is a chronic condition that has caused Brown, now 28, to be unable to walk and dependent on a ventilator to breathe.

To meet her unique medical needs, she needed to find a long-term care facility. The search led her from her hometown of Dillon, S.C., to Flowood, where she now resides at Methodist Specialty Care Center.

"We're one of a very few long-term care facilities in the United States with a mission to serve a younger, severely disabled population," said Larry McKnight, vice president of long-term care for MSCC. "And as the only long-term care facility in Mississippi with a dedicated 24/7 respiratory therapy department, we receive ventilator dependent referrals from all over the southeast."

Brown says that it was hard at first being away from her hometown and family for the first time in her life.

"I've been here since February, and I'm a ways far from home," she said.



Shonda Brown, at left, shows off the crochet piece the Rev. Alan Kolodny, right, taught her to make.

"They don't have any facilities like this close to where I'm from. So when I first got here I was a little homesick."

Brown had considered facilities as far away as Chicago and Oregon, but MSCC won out for its excellent track record and being closest to home. Having that flair for hospitality the South is known for didn't hurt either.

"The people here remind me of everyone back at home," Brown said. "Everyone is so friendly, I like to get out of my room and just talk to the other residents."

The staff at MSCC encourages its residents to stay active, social and engaged, offering arts and crafts classes, social functions, outings and worship

services weekly.

"Since I've been here everyone has been very supportive," she said. "They do a great job helping me stay active. I get to experience life to the best of my abilities."

MSCC's volunteer program is a crucial part of that support.

"Our volunteers play a huge role in the day-to-day activities of the residents," said Robby Scucchi, volunteer director at MSCC. "They are like an extended family, helping them with activities such as arts and crafts, games, spending time with them in a social setting, and even assisting those pursuing further education with school work."

Through the help of a volunteer,

"Since I've been here everyone has been very supportive. They do a great job helping me stay active. I get to experience life to the best of my abilities."

—Shonda Brown

Brown has begun crocheting, a newfound passion that has helped her stay active.

Her crochet coach is volunteer Alan Kolodny, pastor of New Beginnings Community Church in Natchez. He leads worship services on Thursdays, and he and his wife Kathy help residents in any way they can.

"Alan has been as dedicated a volunteer as they come," Scucchi said. "He and Kathy have been dedicated servants of Christ and have gained the trust of every resident in the facility. They make it a point to try and meet with the new residents and find out what their interests are and if at all possible, assist in meeting those needs."

When Brown expressed interest in crocheting, he was happy to teach her the ropes of the craft, which was passed down to him by his grandmother when he was a child.

"Teaching someone was a new thing for me," he said. "She was the first to show an interest in crocheting, and I really didn't know if any of the residents had enough strength in their hands to be able to do it. To be honest, I wasn't sure Shonda could when I first went to her room."

It proved a challenge for both the student and the teacher.

"Shonda has some trouble with her hands, so she has to hold the needle differently than you usually do," Kolodny said. "We had to find the right kind of needle that she could hold comfortably. So we didn't jump right in doing anything too advanced."

"I broke it down to doing a little bit at a time in steps, to help her develop muscle memory in her hands. That really helped her get a feel for it. We've been building up a little more each week."

Brown says she, too, wasn't sure she could master it, but Kolodny's approach was a great help.

"It can look complicated when you watch someone else do it," Brown said. "But once he got me doing it hands-on it became easier. I think it's really relaxing, and it's good exercise for my hands. Now, I feel like I'm a little expert!"

Kolodny says her dedication has been inspiring.

"She's so determined, which is amazing, because that's a big part of learning to crochet," Kolodny said. "She's so excited about it, too. She's doing a great job with it."

Kolodny says he feels a special kinship with the residents, not only through worship, but also because he is limited in his mobility. He has a rare liver disease and relies on a power wheelchair to get around.

"Because of my limitations, I don't get out as much as I'd like to either," he said. "I'm here at MSCC for services on Thursdays and on Sundays I go to preach at my church. I wish I had more time, and was more able to come here to talk and visit. Sometimes they just need someone to lend an ear, someone to care, someone to be there for them."

Kolodny goes the extra mile to help those in need, and he says seeing that same dedication in the staff is what drew him to volunteering at MSCC.

"I've been volunteering here for over 10 years," said Kolodny, who started shortly after MSCC opened its doors in 2003.

"This is a place where they really do their best to take care of people. They work really hard and have such a commitment to their residents."

ABOUT METHODIST SPECIALTY CARE CENTER




MSCC is Mississippi's first residential care facility designed especially for the younger, severely disabled person.

The unique accommodations combined with skilled clinical services provide an environment where residents can thrive. Residents at MSCC stay active, socialize, learn new things, venture out into the community and enjoy life to the fullest extent possible.

That makes the center the perfect place for those who are completely reliant on others for their activities of daily living, but don't necessarily fit or desire the traditional nursing home setting.

MSCC is currently accepting new applications for residency. Occupancy rates are high, so once approved, a new applicant may be placed on a waiting list. Because of the unique nature of our facility, our staff fields questions from potential residents and their families from all across the South.

To speak to a representative or to set up a tour, call 601-420-7760.



Shannon Aiken shows off some of the devices the Oxford clinic offers, such as custom Ole Miss-themed prosthetic sockets.

Best of two worlds

Aiken brings orthotics and prosthetics expertise to Oxford clinic

by Carey Miller

When Shannon Aiken was first introduced to the world of orthotics and prosthetics, he knew he had found his calling.

After graduating from East Carolina University with a degree in exercise and sports science, Aiken was working his first job as a physical therapy technician at the University of North Carolina hospital in Chapel Hill, not far from his hometown of Raleigh.

"I started working with patients that had prostheses and patients that had braces, and found it very interesting," Aiken said. "I loved that O&P was a way to help people, but it's also very mechanically inclined. For me, it was the best of two worlds."

He says he's always been driven to help people, but working with his hands is in his blood.

"My father was a mechanic—but

he wanted a better life for me and didn't want me to follow his path," he said. "So I've always been very analytical, almost to a fault. But for this job it's an asset because it's all about the fine details."

Aiken now serves patients as clinical manager for Methodist Orthotics & Prosthetics' newest clinic, located at 1207 Office Park Drive in Oxford.

Methodist is the largest locally-owned orthotics and prosthetics provider in the state, with locations in Flowood, Hattiesburg, Meridian, Cleveland and Monroe, La.

"Establishing locations throughout the state is important to us," said Methodist O&P director Chris Wallace. "A lot of people in Mississippi have had limited access to O&P care, and we can bring what we have to offer closer to their local communities."

Opening in Oxford was the next logical step in that mission.

"It was an area that we unfortunately had a lack of coverage—our Cleveland clinic was the closest," Wallace said. "The Oxford area is rapidly growing, and the medical community has grown in kind. So we felt like we would be well received there."

The Oxford clinic opened in late 2015. At first, clinicians from Methodist's Cleveland location traveled over to see patients as needed.

Physical therapist Heather Suber has established a strong working relationship with the clinic.

"We're located in New Albany, and there were just no resources in the area," said Suber, who works with pediatric patients at Baptist Rehabilitation. "First, we worked with Lori Verhage from the Cleveland clinic, and now Shannon. They've both been really helpful with our patients, and always readily available."

Methodist conducted a national

“My goal is always for my patients to walk the very best they can. You want them to be able to walk into a room wearing long pants and no one to know they have a prosthesis.”
—Shannon Aiken



Shannon Aiken performs a tune-up on Gayle Bullard's prosthetic in the Oxford clinic's gait room.

search to find a full-time practitioner who could balance clinical care with the management of the location. Aiken has welcomed the challenge.

“My previous job was mainly clinically based,” Aiken said of his position as director of the Center for Orthotic and Prosthetic Care of North Carolina. “Whereas at this job, I’m wearing several hats. I’m more involved in the business and marketing side of things.”

“We’re glad to have found Shannon, as he brings a wealth of experience to the table, having worked in both institutional settings and private settings,” Wallace said. “He is dual certified in both orthotics and prosthetics and that was of great value to us. That allows him to see any type of patient that comes in the door. And his personality fit well with Methodist—he has strong values in doing what is right for the patient.”

Aiken says those shared values are what attracted him to the position.

“When I first interviewed with Methodist, I really liked that they were focused on the patient first and fore-

most,” Aiken said. “The places I’ve worked before were much faster paced. But it’s hard to learn everything you need to know about a patient with a five-minute exam. We do a very thorough evaluation of everyone that comes through the door.”

Gayle Bullard was one of Aiken’s first patients. A volunteer firefighter from Pittsboro, a small community about 30 miles south of Oxford, Bullard had his lower right leg amputated due to complications from diabetes late last year.

“They had just opened this office, and when I got fitted with my prosthesis I went back to work,” Bullard said. “Having them here has been very convenient. I had to come about every two weeks while they were building my prosthesis, and I come back for a check-up every two months. They’ve been real good to me.”

Aiken says that regular visits are important for new prosthetic users to become accustomed to their new device, and to make necessary adjustments to get the best fit.

“My goal is always for my patients to walk the very best they can,” Aiken said. “You could say, quote-unquote, normal. You want them to be able to walk into a room wearing long pants and no one to know they have a prosthesis.”

“That’s why it’s important to take time with each individual patient. There’s not one perfect device for everyone. One could work for one person, but not for another person with that same identical diagnosis and problem.”

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the clinic was held in August in conjunction with the Oxford Chamber of Commerce.

Wallace says he has been impressed with the local community’s support.

“Everyone has been incredibly welcoming to us,” he said. “We love our location, and soon we’ll see Baptist open its new hospital just down the road from us. We’re looking forward to further serving the community.”

“Over the next two to three years we expect to see the Oxford office continue to grow and thrive.”

The director's chair

Custom wheelchair enables audiovisual aspirations of Jackson Prep student with muscular dystrophy

by Susan Marquez

With a flick of his wrist, Adam Malone rises from sitting to standing. Smiling, he demonstrates how he's able to greet someone eye-to-eye instead of looking up at them from his power wheelchair.

It's a welcome change for the 15-year-old, and he has physical therapist Heather Maloney to thank for the new perspective.

As a certified assistive technology professional at Methodist Rehabilitation Center in Jackson, Maloney custom-fits wheelchairs to suit the health and life-style needs of her clients.

In Adam's case, that meant one that would accommodate the activities of a busy high school student—particularly his role as a videographer for Jackson Preparatory School's football team.

A sophomore at the Flowood school, Adam saw a notice last year about the school's Broadcast Club.

"There was a meeting after school, so I went to see what it was all about," he said. "I learned that they were going to do video recordings and live streaming of the football games and I knew I wanted to do that."

Club sponsor Bobby Gross, director of instructional and media technology at Jackson Prep, said as many as 18 to 20 kids participate in the club. And Adam is a standout.

"I've never seen anyone as determined as Adam," Gross said. "We've had to make some adaptations, but we're making it work and he's doing a great job."

Making it work is something Adam and his family have been doing since the day he was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, a group of diseases that causes progressive weakness and loss of muscle mass.

In muscular dystrophy, altered genes interfere with the production of proteins needed to form healthy muscle. And Adam was 2 when his mother, Angela Malone, noticed he wasn't develop-

ing properly.

"He just wasn't walking as early as kids normally do," she said. "Doctors told us it was because he was carried too much, and that he'd eventually walk. But I knew better. I knew in my gut something wasn't right."

Until March of this year, Adam was able to walk and get around on his own. But the progressive nature of the disease finally caught up with him.

"Typically, boys with muscular dystrophy stop walking between the ages of 10 to 14," Angela said. "Adam made it to age 15."

As Adam became more dependent on assistive technology, the Malones turned to MRC's assistive technology staff for guidance.

"Heather helped find the right chair for Adam, and made sure it fit him properly," Angela said. "She took the time to really talk to him about his needs and added details which make his life easier."

"The chair has a seat elevator, so he can raise it up," Heather explained. "He can also extend it to a full standing position."

Having that capability allows Adam

to be at the right height in the biology lab, which has tables higher than an average desk. In standing mode, he can also be on the same level as his classmates while conversing.

Maloney worked extensively with Adam, querying him on details about his day-to-day activities to determine what add-ons his chair might require.

"Because of his disease, he gets thirsty a lot," she said. "We added a cup holder so he can have a large cup of water wherever he goes without having to ask someone for a drink."

The wheelchair also features hooks on the back for his backpack and a handy tray table. "The tray is a place for him to take notes in class, have an iPad or phone, and he can put his food on it at lunch time," Maloney said.

It took several weeks for the custom chair to arrive, and when it did, Adam needed training in the chair. "I figured it out pretty fast," he said as he smiled.

Learning to compensate for his disabilities is something Adam has done very well, especially when it comes to his love for football.

"I haven't always liked football," Adam said. But that changed when he began playing the Madden football video game.

Although Adam couldn't play the sport himself, he looked for ways he could participate.


As a freshman, Adam ran a camera from the accessibility deck in the Prep stadium. This year, he's able to shoot from the sidelines because of his new wheelchair.

Because Adam needs one hand to operate the chair's controls, Gross came up with an innovative way to secure the camera to a bracket attached to Adam's chair. That has given him more freedom to move up and down the field to capture plays as they happen.

A small setback for Adam happened on Aug. 22 when he fell at school and fractured the distal plate in his knee. This caused some concern with Adam's par-

"Heather helped find the right chair for Adam, and made sure it fit him properly. She took the time to really talk to him about his needs and added details which make his life easier."

—Angela Malone



Adam Malone's custom wheelchair allows for him to capture all the Jackson Prep football action from right on the sidelines.

ents, who did not have experience using a transfer board to move him from car to chair.

"Adam had been able to stand up for us to transfer him," Angela explained. "When he injured his knee, he wasn't able to stand. We needed help!"

She called upon Joe Jacobson, program director of outpatient services at MRC, and Jennifer Young, a physical therapist at the MRC outpatient clinic in Flowood.

"They were so kind and patient with us," Angela said. "They spent an hour teaching us how to use a transfer board."

Adam's injury resulted in a need for physical therapy, which he also received at the clinic. He is still in a knee brace, so Adam is only able to stand in his wheelchair for about ten minutes at a time.

"I'm getting stronger every day," Adam said.

Now, Adam's back on the sidelines,

and he takes his work very seriously. As he does his job, Adam is focused, blocking out everything except the game and his camera angles.

While it's common to see a camera on a tripod stand with three legs, Gross designed a custom pole that a local metal fabricator made to clamp a monopod, or single leg bracket, to Adam's chair.

"Our booster club helped us buy a video transmitter for HD signal, and that has really increased what Adam is able to do," explained Gross. "He can move up and down the sidelines and follow plays up close. Our biggest challenge now is communication between Adam and the production crew in the press box."

Adam's job as a videographer isn't over when football season ends. "I also film Prep's basketball games and school plays," he said.

He's in the control room for both activities which he really enjoys, but said

nothing compares to the thrill of being so close to the action on the football game sidelines.

Chuck Box, the sports information director at Jackson Prep, is proud of the way Adam has learned to shoot video at the games. "He's a determined and amazing young man and we're proud of the work he's doing here at Prep."

"I see so many possibilities opening to Adam," said Gross. "When he sets his mind to do something, you can tell it's going to happen."

Adam said that he is interested in going into broadcasting as a career and is already looking at colleges.

"We had a college fair at Prep not long ago, and a few schools there had good video departments," Adam said.

His mom is wishing that he will choose one close to home, but she is confident that Adam will be fine anywhere he wants to go. ♡



Sandra Austin walks for the first time on her new ankle-foot orthosis, supervised by orthotist Willie Spann, as her fiancée Rodger Keeton looks on.

Never too late

CORE Clinic's suite of outpatient services helps improve SCI patient's quality of life two decades after injury

by Carey Miller

Since her spinal cord injury over 20 years ago, Sandra Austin has never stopped believing she could get better. Initially, her doctors didn't give her much hope of walking again.

"I did not want to accept that," she said. "I understand that sometimes there are limits, but I felt like if I really applied myself there was a chance."

Austin was born in Zambia and grew up in South Africa. She was a promising athlete and training to swim in the Olympics, but was injured in a headfirst fall into a shallow lake. SCI medicine was limited in South Africa at the time. Outcomes weren't favorable, even for those with incomplete injuries like hers.

"They told me I was blessed to still be alive," she said.

Today, advances in rehab provide more hope, and continued care helps

persons with SCI achieve a better quality of life. That's why Austin is glad to have connected with Methodist Rehabilitation Center Outpatient Services in Flowood and its innovative CORE Clinic.

"Inpatient rehab is based on interdisciplinary care—face-to-face problem solving and team-based, patient-centered care," said Dr. Philip Blount, a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician at MRC. "What CORE does is bring that collaborative focus to an outpatient setting."

Through CORE—an acronym for Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation—Austin got all the outpatient services she needs.

"What's different about CORE is that the patient gets to see different specialties together in the same day, under the same roof, with a single appointment," said Blount, who coordinates

care for CORE in addition to his practice at Methodist Pain & Spine Center. "It's a process that otherwise could take a month through multiple appointments."

Having to travel less for care is a plus for Austin, who lives in Meridian.

"With everybody there, you don't have to go all over the place," she said. "And with the way they communicate with each other, they're all on board with the same program and the same goal in mind."

CORE includes physical, occupational and speech therapy, orthotics and prosthetics, assistive technology, psychology and more.

"Our team works together as a unit to develop a more individualized course of care through problem-solving sessions," Blount said. "It allows us to learn amongst ourselves from the various things that each discipline brings to the table."

"There may be things that O&P can do, or the seating clinic can do that I don't know about. Or there may be diagnoses I can make that may help them in their course of treatment."

Austin has continued to make gains in her ability, even two decades after injury.

"I came to see Dr. Blount, and he was amazed at the stuff I had learned to do on my own," Austin said. "He said, 'We're going to help you.' He's given me a lot of hope."

One of the first things Austin needed was a new wheelchair, as the one she had burned in a house fire. Erin Bischofberger, therapy manager of the Assistive Technology Clinic and a certified seating and mobility specialist, recommended a power standing wheelchair for Austin to maintain an active lifestyle.

"She was awesome, because she really listened to what I was trying to do and made a recommendation," Austin said. "I didn't know a chair like that existed until she told me."

Having the assistive technology clinic on site allows Bischofberger to make the best possible recommendations.

"We're the only freestanding seating clinic in the state," she said. "Some other places do wheelchair evaluations, but what's unique about us is the amount of demo equipment we have on site that patients can try out. And if we don't already have it, we can get it for you easily."

Austin raises exotic chickens at her home in Meridian. Her new wheelchair allows for greater mobility to care for her beloved birds, as well as do things like cook and clean around the house. She says a simple thing like being able to reach a high shelf again has brought her joy.

"When you haven't been able to do something, it's exciting to be able to do it again," she said.

"Sometimes people come in and you just get this gut feeling that the right piece of equipment will change their world, and she was one of them," Bis-



Sandra Austin tries out her new standing wheelchair with the support of certified seating and mobility specialist Erin Bischofberger.

chofberger said.

The chair is also useful in helping Austin continue to improve physically.

"Standing an hour a day helps to strengthen my muscles," she said.

Austin has good function in her left leg, and said that recently she was surprised to see movement in the toes on her right foot.

"It's been years!" she said. "So I try to walk with a walker a little bit. Dr. Blount said that they could build me a brace to help with foot drop. He said he feels like it could help me get pretty good at walking with a walker. So I'm going to try."

Willie Spann, a certified orthotist at Methodist Orthotics & Prosthetics, fabricated a custom device for Austin.

"What we did was cast her for a hybrid ankle-foot orthosis," Spann said. "What that means is it's a combination of plastic and metal, with double-action ankle joints. What we were able to do was limit the motion in her ankle and foot, and when you do that you can also stabilize the knee. With the brace, she is able to take a step and put weight on it without her knee buckling."

Austin is returning to MRC for physical therapy to work on her walking, and remains hopeful that she will continue to make gains.

"I love all the staff at MRC, I think they're the most helpful people you could ever meet," Austin said. "And every one of them excels in their own category. They've all helped me tremendously." ❧

"The way they communicate with each other, they're all on board with the same program and the same goal in mind."

— Sandra Austin

A servant's heart

Dedication to service earns longtime MRC volunteer Charlie Lott top honors from Goodwill Industries

by Nell Floyd

Charlie Lott appears every Monday morning at Methodist Rehabilitation Center with a smile, ready to transport patients to therapy, distribute mail and sing.

He's known for his cheerful disposition, caring attitude and kindness, all of which have won him a spot in the hearts of patients, families and staff.

For his dedication to MRC, as well as his devotion to several ministries of his church, Lott was honored as an outstanding volunteer by Goodwill Industries Volunteer Services during its 2016 Volunteer Salute Dinner.

It is satisfying to help others, said Lott, 84, a Jackson resident who retired from IBM in 1987 after 31 years, then switched to a career in real estate until his second retirement in 2000.

"It really makes you count your blessings when you see what other people are going through," he said.

Lott sold business equipment ranging from electric typewriters to personal computers during his time in the office products division of IBM. And he said the sales career taught him to always look on the sunny side of life and share that with people he meets.

"Most of my family was in sales," he said. "If you like sales, that goes along with it."

A friendship with Chris Blount, director of the Wilson Research Foundation at MRC, led Lott to volunteer at the center.

"I told him I'd like to talk to him about volunteering there," Lott said, recalling that Blount soon found work for him.

In 2008, Lott began volunteering at MRC, pushing patients in wheelchairs to therapy, often sharing a prayer, scripture or words of encouragement along the way.

Lott delivers mail to patients and to the gift shop at the center. "I once delivered 30 get-well cards to a single patient," he said, noting that is a record for him.

When a patient celebrates a birthday, Lott and fellow volunteer Dub Duperier of Jackson brighten the day by delivering a Happy Birthday balloon and sign and by singing a round of "Happy Birthday to You."

During special events that help raise funds for the center's Wilson Research Foundation, Lott is ready to help with what needs to be done.



Lott's volunteerism is impressive when you look at the numbers.

He has contributed more than 925 hours of service to the center, said Robby Scucchi, director of volunteer services at MRC. And his dedication led the Mississippi Hospital Association to honor Lott as its 2015 Volunteer of the Year from MRC.

What's heartwarming is Lott's attitude on life, Scucchi said.

"His philosophy of life is 'Always look on the positive side of life, count your blessings and be thankful,'" he said. "Without a doubt, Mr. Charlie has been a great asset to the day-to-day function of Methodist Rehabilitation Center and has proven to be an even greater example to the staff and families of our patients

with his vibrant and caring heart."

Margo Burnside of Jackson, chair of the 2016 Volunteer Salute Dinner presented by Goodwill Industries Volunteer Service, said Lott's dependability, caring attitude and interest in others characterize a prized volunteer.

"He has a servant's heart," she said. "He doesn't just volunteer with Methodist Rehab but also with his church."

A member of Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson, Lott helps out once a month by delivering meals at 14 houses in Jackson for the church's Meals on Wheels program.

He also gives of his time to Helping Hands, a ministry at Christ United Methodist that assists widows and others in need with minor home repairs. Lott and his wife, Betty, sing with the JOY (Just Older Youth) Choir, a group of 25 senior adults from Christ United Methodist that entertains at nursing homes and other venues.

Lott, who grew up about 70 miles southeast of Jackson in Seminary, spent 18 months on active duty with the Air Force during the Korean Conflict and graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a bachelor's degree in marketing. He and his wife have three sons and a daughter, eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Lott considers each day a gift and strives to make the most of it. "I've been blessed," he said. 🙏

Dr. Philip Blount uses the ultrasound machine to pinpoint the best location for a pain injection in Robin Collinwood's knee.



Ultra-effective

Ultrasound provides for precision pain management

by Carey Miller

The word ultrasound likely invokes an image of expectant parents getting the first peek at their soon-to-be bundle of joy.

But the technology has other medical applications. One such use is giving musculoskeletal physicians a peek under your skin to precisely administer pain injections.

"It is exactly the same type of ultrasound you might get at an OB-GYN visit," said Dr. Philip Blount of Methodist Pain & Spine Center, located at Methodist Rehabilitation Center's outpatient facility in Flowood. "It's a non-invasive, painless way for us to look at musculoskeletal structures, and can be used to help guide our injections to ensure proper delivery of the medications."

Previously, musculoskeletal physicians had to use their knowledge of anatomy to provide an educated guess.

"Before, injections were done blind," Blount said. "Ultrasound has only been used in my specialty for a little over five years. It's just now becoming much more common in musculoskeletal and sports medicine."

While ultrasound is a helpful tool, it's no substitute for a well-trained physician like Blount, who has been administering injections for most of his career.

"Well, with ultrasound I can say I've confirmed that I was trained well," he said. "But while some areas like the wrist are easier, with other harder to reach areas such as the knee, ultrasound gives me the confidence that my needle is in the

proper location."

A patient of Blount's, Robin Collinwood admits she raised an eyebrow when she first heard of the treatment.

"That was very different for me," she said. "I've had knee injections before. It was very intriguing to see how he could look inside and see where to put the medication—and he could show me on the device's screen as well."

Collinwood suffers from fibromyalgia and was treated for knee pain by Blount using the ultrasound-guided injections.

"Since I finished the set of injections I'm not having any pain," she said. "I'm able to walk up stairs now without hurting. I can ride a bike again. It's helped me immensely." 🙌

MRC ROCKS RIO

Once again, MRC represented the United States at the Paralympics. Wheelchair fencer Joey Brinson (top left and bottom right) and track and field athlete Shaquille Vance (top right) both made their second trip to the games, this time held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in September. They were joined by MRC therapeutic recreation director Ginny Boydston (bottom left right), who serves as team manager for the U.S. Wheelchair Fencing Team.

Brinson finished 10th place in Men's Category B Epee. Vance finished fourth in the Men's 200-meter T42, but did not qualify for the final for the Men's 100-meter T42 as he was hobbled by a foot injury.

Later in September, the athletes were invited to Washington, D.C., (bottom right) where they were honored at the White House for representing their country.





Now I can...

do all my favorite things

After suffering a stroke, Carol Gaddis of Jackson could only twitch an eyebrow and wiggle a couple of fingers on her paralyzed right side.

But thanks to the good Lord and the good care at Methodist Rehabilitation Center, she's back doing all the activities she loves—hunting, fishing, sewing, crocheting and making and selling soap.

"They kept working with me, and now I can do things I used to do and more," she said. "They have brought me such a long way. I can clap my hands in church now and hold my hands up to praise the Lord."



Earl R. Wilson, Founding Chairman
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THE NEW LOOK FOR SPINAL CORD INJURY CARE

by Susan Christensen

DURING HIS FIRST TOUR OF METHODIST REHABILITATION CENTER, **DR. KEITH TANSEY** REMEMBERS BEING TAKEN ABACK BY THE HOSPITAL'S RESEARCH CAPABILITIES.

"I VISITED IN 2011 BECAUSE

I knew Dr. Dobrivoje Stokic (MRC's administrative director of research), and I was curious what he was up to," said Dr. Tansey, then a spinal cord injury researcher at Emory University, the Shepherd Center and Veterans Affairs Hospital in Atlanta.

"There was a gait lab, an electrophysiology lab and people were publishing papers. They also had been twice designated a Traumatic Brain Injury Model System—all in the absence of a tight relationship with an academic center.

"That was impressive because Jackson is a mid-sized city, not an Atlanta or

Houston where there are a large number of patients and investigators."

Today, there's even more to admire at the Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery, the research arm of MRC. The CNRR recently expanded to include 4,500 square feet of lab and office space and \$700,000 worth of new robotic rehabilitation devices.

There's more to come, thanks in part to a 2014 affiliation agreement between MRC and the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Both centers have been collaborating to create a powerful new model for neuroscience research, education and clinical care in Mississippi.

Known as the Neuro Institute at UMMC, the emerging entity is the umbrella organization for centers on stroke, addiction and neurotrauma. An all-encompassing spinal cord injury program—coordinated by Tansey—is an initial focus of the neurotrauma center.

As a key player in the new dynamic, Tansey was recruited for roles as a senior scientist at MRC, a professor of restorative neurology in the departments of neurosurgery and neurobiology and anatomical sciences at UMMC and a physician for the Spinal Cord Injury Clinic at the Jackson-based G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Dr. Jennifer Villacorta visits with patient Virginia Noble in the hallway of MRC's newly renovated spinal cord injury floor.





Dr. Dobrivoje Stokic



Dr. Jennifer Villacorta



Dr. Keith Tansey

While not everyone would want to answer to three separate entities, Tansey said the opportunity drew him to Mississippi.

“I was looking for a way to continue my three-pronged approach of basic lab research, human research and clinical care,” he said. “I figured there was the potential to have all the pieces in Jackson, but none were so big to preclude working with the others.”

The move puts Tansey on the forefront of translating basic science into clinical practice. And it’s an intriguing prospect for the president-elect of the American Spinal Injury Association.

“I find the start of things an interesting opportunity,” Tansey said. “The chance to do something new well is a lot more attractive to me than being somewhere that is resting on its laurels and is

less open to new thinking and new advances.”

Research has long been a focus at MRC, resulting in more than 250 publications in medical journals. Now, Stokic is looking forward to collaborating with Tansey and the benefits the partnership will provide MRC patients.

“Basic scientists are expected to show how their research will progress from the laboratory bench to the patient’s bedside,” Stokic said. “And this gives our patients the opportunity to participate in groundbreaking studies and be among the first to benefit from treatments that are being developed.”

Dr. Jennifer Villacorta, MRC’s new admitting physician for the spinal cord injury program, will be part of the team that translates research breakthroughs to clinical care. And like Tansey, Villacorta

said she was attracted to Mississippi by “the potential of the place.”

“The resources are all here, it is just a matter of utilizing and building on them,” said Villacorta, who is also an assistant professor of neurosurgery at UMMC.

While Tansey and Stokic make their imprint in the research lab, Villacorta expects to impact protocols for patient care. “When I first came here, I was excited about focusing on clinical program development,” she said. “My passion is working with a team to improve standards of care.”

A physical therapist before becoming a board-certified physician in physical medicine and rehab and spinal cord injury medicine, Villacorta has unique insights into the challenges facing her rehab team.

“THIS GIVES OUR PATIENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN GROUNDBREAKING STUDIES AND BE AMONG THE FIRST TO BENEFIT FROM TREATMENTS THAT ARE BEING DEVELOPED.”

— Dr. Dobrivoje Stokic

"It's so easy to write an order and expect it to be done," she said. "But working as a team to identify the barriers that prevent rehabilitation goals from being achieved—that's where the art of medicine comes in. You've got to make sure everyone is on the same page and going in the right direction."

The big-picture goal is for rehabilitation staff at MRC to work with trauma and spine surgeons at UMMC to foster a continuum of care throughout a patient's recovery.

"Being housed in a free-standing facility, connected but separated from the other hospitals, it's easy for us to get disconnected from our acute care hospital colleagues," Villacorta said. "But if we can have the opportunity to get involved in the patient's care as early as before surgery, the care becomes more holistic and comprehensive."

Building a bridge between acute care and rehab also suits the research aims of Tansey and Stokic.

"The early interventions that are being administered in the acute care setting need to be followed up in the rehabilitation setting to uncover the true benefits," Stokic said. "Our joint effort will strengthen the clinical research agenda that UMMC and Methodist Rehab now

formally share because it will create a continuum of care that is relevant both in clinical practice and research."

"My goal is to be in patients' rooms early on and get them over to rehab," Tansey said. "And when they're getting ready to leave rehab, I'll say: 'So glad you're going home, but there are two research studies we're doing downstairs in the human lab that you might be eligible for if you're interested.'"

Tansey's research mainly focuses on neuroplasticity—the ability of neural circuits to compensate for injury and disease and adjust to new environments.

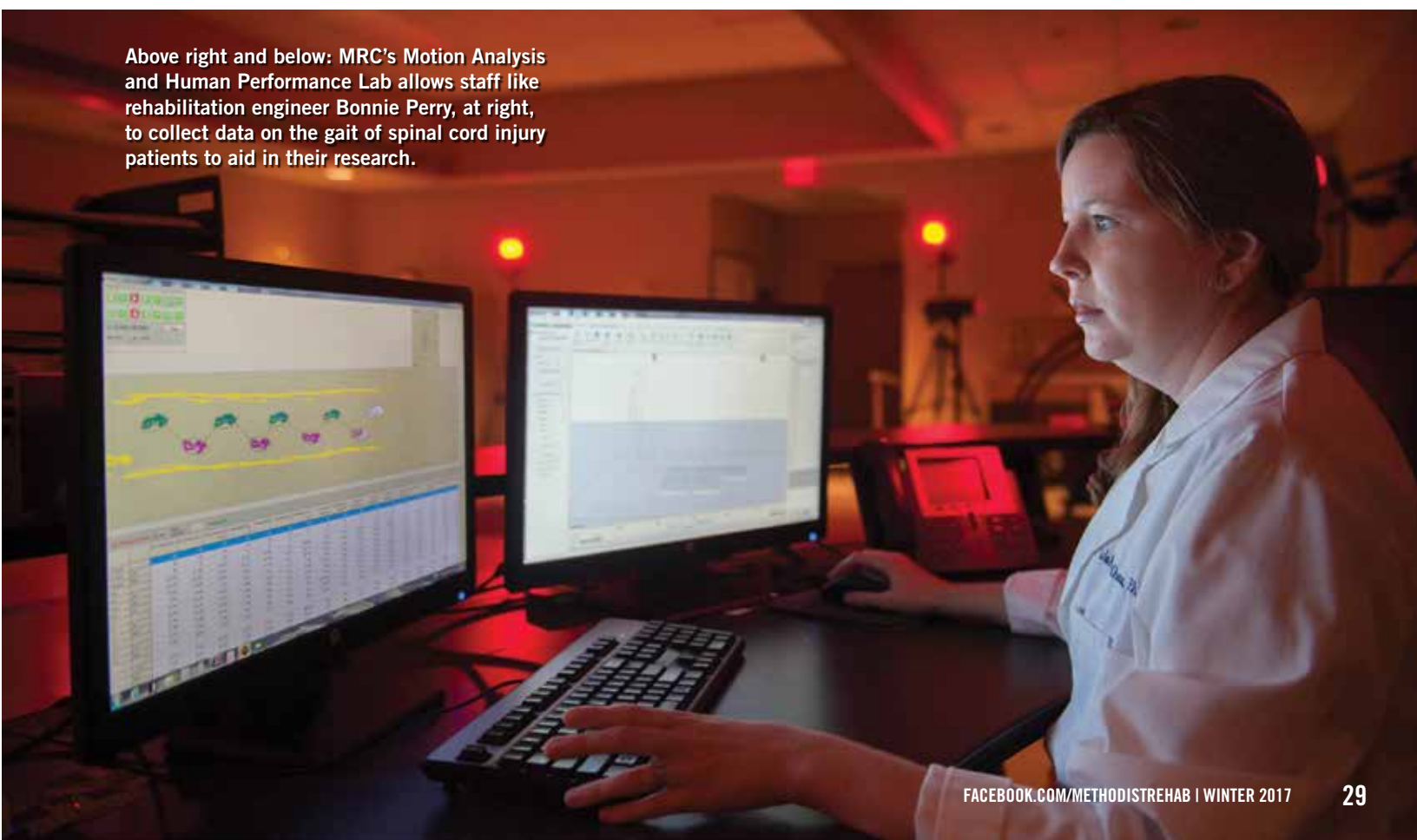
"The idea would be to figure out how to get the nervous system that reorganizes in the best way to recover lost functions, while simultaneously limiting abnormal functions," Tansey said.

Aiding Tansey's efforts are several high-tech lab additions that double as research and therapy aids. For instance, MRC is now home to a Lokomat-Pro FreeD device. The robot-assisted gait-trainer has proven to be effective intervention for improving over-ground walking function.

"Therapists like robotics because of their potential to help patients," Tansey said. "But what's exciting to me is they



Above right and below: MRC's Motion Analysis and Human Performance Lab allows staff like rehabilitation engineer Bonnie Perry, at right, to collect data on the gait of spinal cord injury patients to aid in their research.



“WE COULD BE THE PERFECT BOUTIQUE CENTER. WE HAVE TOP-NOTCH BASIC SCIENTISTS AND HUMAN LABORATORY CAPACITY THAT’S ONLY PRESENT IN A HANDFUL OF PLACES IN THIS COUNTRY.”

— Dr. Keith Tansey

are very good at collecting data and setting up experimental conditions to test hypotheses.”

They may also be used as teaching tools for instructing medical and graduate students. In addition to their duties at MRC, Tansey, Stokic and Villacorta also have teaching roles at UMMC.

“I’ve always had a heart for academics,” Villacorta said. “It pushes me and allows me to continuously grow. When you are constantly reevaluating yourself and your practice, you ensure you maintain quality of care and don’t become lax in pursuing innovative ideas.”

Stokic said having a presence in the UMMC classroom should offer opportunities to recruit graduate students interested in neuroscience research. And it

could also help with another affiliation goal—educating specialists in physical medicine and rehabilitation in the state.

“This joint effort has brought people from different professions, different backgrounds and different responsibilities together to provide a critical mass for establishing a competitive PM&R residency training program,” Stokic said. “The components have been in place. But thanks to the affiliation, those components can come together to form a successful academic unit.”

It may be a tall order to align research, clinical and academic efforts in a way that tears down territorial barriers and inspires innovation. But those involved believe Mississippi is as good a place as any to try.

“If we have continuity, we could be the perfect boutique center,” Tansey said. “We have top-notch basic scientists and human laboratory capacity that’s only present in a handful of places in this country. We may not be the place that does the classic large clinical trial. But we can be the step before that—the preclinical human discovery that is so desperately lacking in rehabilitation. We could be the place to come for the discovery of the first in human experiments of 20 patients done really well. This is the place where basic science translated into human science translated into human care will lead someone to say let’s study 500 patients to see if what they discovered in 20 patients in Mississippi is really worth trotting out there.”

LAB LINGO 101

3

TYPES OF RESEARCH

BASIC

Scientists do basic research to uncover novel information about how things work. They typically do their experiments in academic or “benchtop” settings, using molecules, cells, animal models and the like.

Example: Doing research that notes a link between inflammation and neuropathic pain in animals with spinal cord injury.



TRANSLATIONAL

Scientists do further testing to fine-tune proposed interventions. The idea is to provide a promising starting point for widespread human testing.

Example: Strategies to block inflammation after spinal cord injury are tested on animals to determine proper dosages and possible side effects.



CLINICAL

Scientists build on the knowledge learned in the lab to explore whether new discoveries can solve problems in the real world. This ranges from “first in human” testing of a new intervention all the way up to full-blown clinical trials.

Example: Trying an intervention to block inflammation after a spinal cord injury to evaluate the safety and effectiveness on humans.

ROBOT-ASSISTED REHABILITATION

Expanded research
lab space makes
room for new
robotic devices

ErigoPro

The ErigoPro is a robotic device that combines several important rehabilitation therapies in one—a tilt table, functional electrical stimulation and robotic leg movements. It allows therapists to put patients in standing positions sooner, while also providing muscle activation and cyclic leg loading. Benefits include improvements in cardiovascular health, blood flow, bowel/bladder function, range of motion and flexibility and a reduction in spasticity, muscle atrophy and postural hypotension (a type of low blood pressure related to standing up).



Picture: Hocoma, Switzerland

LokomatPro FreeD

Even before they are able to support their own weight or move their legs independently, patients use the LokomatPro FreeD treadmill to practice walking. Therapists first fit users into a harness system that offers the option of partial weight support. Then, a robotic device is attached to the hips, knees and ankles of the patient to guide their legs in a proper stepping motion. The repetition of precise movements provides important sensory input, aids muscle memory and encourages new neural pathways, while an attached video game system offers encouragement and feedback. The therapy can help improve cardiovascular and pulmonary function, increase bone density and decrease spasticity.



Picture: Hocoma, Switzerland

ArmeoPower

The ArmeoPower is specifically designed for arm and hand therapy in the early stage of rehabilitation. The robotic exoskeleton has an assist-as-needed arm support to allow even patients with severe movement impairments to repeat a high number of therapeutic exercises. And a virtual reality training program offers game-like activities to keep patients engaged. The system helps improve range of motion, strength and gross motor coordination. And by tracking speed, accuracy and even trace amounts of movement, it provides therapists a precise record of each patient's progress.



Picture: Hocoma, Switzerland

THE NEW FACES OF METHODIST REHAB

THOMAS STURDAVANT, M.D.

Dr. Thomas Sturdavant is a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician at Methodist Rehabilitation Center. He previously served as the medical director of the rehab unit at Forrest General Hospital, Hattiesburg, and as a PM&R physician at Memorial Hospital, Gulfport. He also has 17 years of private practice experience in pain management.

A native of Jacksonville, N.C., Sturdavant is a graduate of the Medical College of Ohio, now known as The University of Toledo Medical Center. He served his residency at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. ♣



Dr. Sturdavant

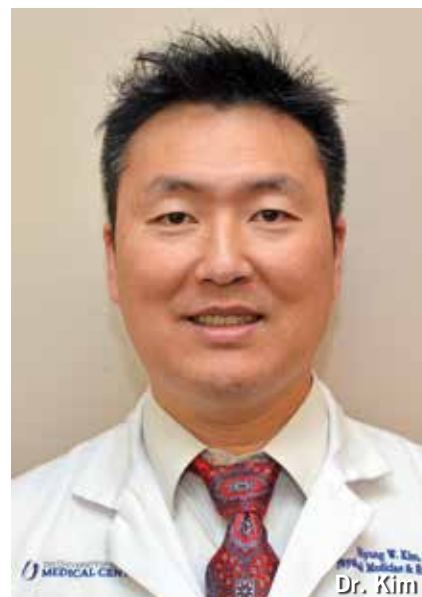
HYUNG KIM, M.D.

Dr. Hyung Kim is the admitting attending physician for orthopedic and amputee injuries at Methodist Rehabilitation Center and an assistant professor of neurosurgery at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. He is also a member of the Neuro Institute at UMMC.

Kim earned his medical degree at Texas Tech University before serving an internship at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. He was a Navy General Medical Officer for five years, spending time with Special Boat Team 22 in Mississippi as the Medical Department Head and as the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) School Medical Officer in San Diego, Calif.

After his initial tour with the Navy, Kim completed his residency training in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Carolinas Rehabilitation Center in Charlotte, N.C. He then returned to the Navy for an additional two years, deploying to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and returning to work at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. He also served as the medical director of the outpatient clinic and the traumatic brain injury clinic.

Kim came to UMMC in 2013 to complete a fellowship in interventional pain medicine and is board-certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and pain medicine. He currently splits time working with veterans at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery Veterans Affairs Medical Center in addition to his re-



Dr. Kim

sponsibilities at MRC.

Along with his interventional pain skills, he is also certified in acupuncture for musculoskeletal pain and uses a wide variety of tools to help patients manage chronic pain. ♣

KEITH TANSEY, M.D., PH.D

Dr. Keith Tansey is a senior scientist at the Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery and is a member of the Neuro Institute at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

He also serves on UMMC's faculty as a professor of rehabilitation medicine in the Department of Neurosurgery and in the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomical Sciences, and as a physician in the Spinal Cord Injury Clinic at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

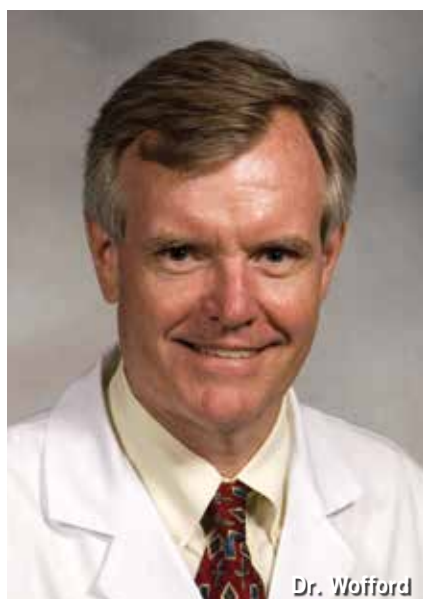
He is board-certified in neurology with subspecialty certifications in spinal cord injury medicine and neural repair and rehabilitation. He is president-elect of the American Spinal Injury Association, and serves on the boards of the American Society for Neurorehabilitation and the International Society for Restorative Neurology.

Tansey's previous appointments include serving as a neurology and physiology faculty member at Emory University, Atlanta, as a physician at the Atlanta VA Medical Center, as director of the spinal cord injury program and junior faculty at the

In the past year, MRC has expanded, remodeling two patient floors and adding more beds. With this growth comes an expanded staff of physicians, many of whom have faculty positions at the University of Mississippi Medical Center as part of MRC's historic affiliation agreement.



Dr. Tansey



Dr. Wofford



Dr. Villacorta

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, and as the director of the spinal cord injury research program at Atlanta's Shepherd Center.

He has authored or co-authored numerous articles in peer-reviewed publications, three book chapters and over 100 abstracts. He is currently co-editing a book titled "Neurological Aspects of Spinal Cord Injury." 📖

JOHN D. WOFFORD, M.D.

Dr. John D. Wofford is an admitting physician for Methodist Rehabilitation Center. He also serves on the faculty of the University of Mississippi Medical Center as an associate professor of medicine, and is a member of the Neuro Institute at UMMC.

Wofford is board-certified in internal medicine and the subspecialty of infectious disease. He has served on the UMMC faculty since 1984, and previously served as a physician at MRC from 1983-1990. Wofford is a graduate of Jefferson Medical College, now Sidney Kimmel Medical College, at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, with further medical education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is a member of the Society of Hospital Medicine and the American College of Physicians. 📖

JENNIFER VILLACORTA, M.D.

Dr. Jennifer Villacorta is the admitting physician for the Spinal Cord Injury Program at Methodist Rehabilitation Center. She also serves on the faculty of the University of Mississippi Medical Center as an assistant professor of neurosurgery, and is a member of the Neuro Institute at UMMC.

Villacorta is board-certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and SCI medicine. She most recently served as medical director for outpatient spinal cord injury services at the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan, Detroit Medical Center, and as an assistant professor of PM&R at Wayne State University.

Villacorta is a graduate of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine in Manila. She completed her residency in PM&R at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, Ark., and served a fellowship in SCI medicine at the Institute of Rehabilitation and Research affiliated with the University of Texas Health Science Center and Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Villacorta is a member of the American Spinal Injury Association, the Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals and the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

She is certified in wound care management by the National Alliance of Wound Care and Ostomy. 📖

a scholar and a fighter

USM graduate enrolls in elite grad school after overcoming rare brain disorder, six-month coma

by Susan Christensen

**JASMINE
“COCO”
WHITESIDE
WAS NOT
HERSELF.**

Usually reliable and upbeat, the University of Southern Mississippi senior had begun ditching plans with friends and texting photos of herself crying.

Her mother, Angela Whiteside, was baffled. She knew her daughter as intelligent and independent, the kind of kid who takes care of business.

“Whatever you wanted or needed, Coco was there for you,” Whiteside said. “Ain’t nobody perfect, but she was perfect.”

And now she was a perfect mess.

“She was saying stuff that didn’t make sense,” Whiteside said. “She told one of her professors that she was chasing the sun in her car.”



Jasmine "Coco" Whiteside

On Sunday, Dec. 14, 2013, an agitated and paranoid Jasmine showed up at the Hattiesburg home of Dr. Amy Chasteen Miller, her academic advisor, mentor and friend.

Jasmine hadn't been sleeping or eating and had a headache. And when Miller took her in, she remembers thinking Jasmine was "a good night's sleep and a meal away from normal."

Then things went from bad to unbelievable.

"On Monday, I came out of my bedroom and she was standing in my kitchen in her bra and underwear talking to my husband," said Miller, a USM sociology professor and assistant provost.

"I almost fell out because there are two things Jasmine would never do—be immodest or use foul language. And she also was cursing a blue streak.

"Between Sunday and Tuesday, I watched her unravel as a person and slip into a state of apparent madness."

The cause was as mind-boggling as Jasmine's behavior. She had a disease that wasn't even named until 2007.

"DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO SAVE HER"

The staff of a Hattiesburg mental health facility began evaluating Jasmine on Dec. 17, 2013, and diagnosed catatonic schizophrenia.

But Miller sensed Jasmine's problems were more physical than psychiatric. And a call from Jasmine's mother confirmed her hunch.

"She was sobbing, and she said Jasmine had been rushed to the ER with uncontrollable seizures," Miller said. "And they were trying to figure out how to get a helicopter there to fly her to Jackson.

"Her mother and I drove to Jackson together to the ICU at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. That's where we were the next seven months."

Dr. Michael Baumann, then a pulmonary critical care physician for UMMC's Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU), did the detective work to diagnose Jasmine with anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis in January 2014. And during the six months Jasmine spent in a coma, MICU intensivist Dr. Andrew Wilhelm oversaw her care.

The rare disease occurs when the body's immune system attacks proteins

"We had heard wonderful things about MRC and were anxious for her to get in. When she was able to make that transition, it was a happy day because we knew she was going to get the care she needed."

—Dr. Amy Chasteen Miller

in the brain that control electrical impulses i.e. N-methyl, D-aspartate receptors.

According to the Anti-NMDA Receptor Encephalitis Foundation, the condition mainly afflicts young adults and children and females are about four times more likely to be affected.

Symptoms include flu-like effects, memory problems, sleep disorders, speech dysfunction, confused and delusional thinking, hallucinations, disinhibited behaviors and movement disorders such as spasms and catatonia.

The signs mimic psychiatric disorders, which is why many victims of anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis are mistakenly sent to mental health facilities. Jasmine said she was actually fortunate to have had seizures because it convinced doctors her problems were physiological.

The likely cause was a teratoma, a type of ovarian tumor that can contain a ghastly collection of teeth, hair, limbs or other organ tissues.

Dr. John Parry, director of UMMC's Division of Reproductive Health and Infertility, said more than half of women with anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis have teratomas. Encephalitis occurs when antibodies meant to target rogue brain cells in the teratoma start attacking healthy brain tissue, too.

When that happens, teratomas are typically removed. But Jasmine's teratoma cells weren't visible on imaging scans, which left her family facing a difficult decision.

They could have her ovaries removed, a potentially lifesaving option. But if she didn't have ovarian teratomas, the 22-year-old would have needlessly lost the ability to become pregnant or produce estrogen.

"Estrogen levels have an effect on your heart health, your bone health and on all kinds of things," Parry said. So once her surgery was over, Jasmine would need to begin estrogen replacement therapy.

"I told her brother the deal with the surgery, and he broke down crying," said Jasmine's mother. "He said do whatever it takes to save her."

Parry also advocated for the surgery, although it was an odd position for a physician who treats infertility.

"She is the only person for whom I have deliberately wanted to take out both ovaries in the five years I've been in Mississippi," Parry said. "Being in a coma and being as sick as she was, it was a last resort because she was getting progressively worse."

While Parry did Jasmine's surgery, friends and family gathered in an ICU waiting room. Before the surgery was over, they got the news all had been hoping for. Jasmine did have teratomas. The right decision had been made.

Jasmine would likely survive, but it would be a long time until she was herself again.

Meanwhile, vestiges of her former life began popping up in her email. Some of the nation's most elite schools were wooing the scholar for their graduate sociology programs.

"I've never seen another student get the kind of offers she received," Miller said. "I had to contact the schools and say: 'This is going to sound crazy, but she has this rare condition and is in a coma. Could you allow her to revisit this sometime later?'"



USM professor Amy Chasteen Miller, Jasmine Coco Whiteside and Jasmine's mom Angela Whiteside.

“COCO GOING FORWARD”

In August, Jasmine began graduate school at Ohio State University.

It's a testament to the mind's ability to mend and her own stubborn perseverance. She held onto her goals even when she couldn't hold a thought in her head.

“She would clutch her tattered graduate school application forms and say: ‘Teach me. Teach me,’” said Dr. Clea Evans, director of the neuropsychology department at Methodist Rehabilitation Center.

Jasmine transferred to MRC's nationally recognized brain injury program on May 8, 2014. Miller remembers it as “a pivotal point in Jasmine's recovery.”

“We had heard wonderful things about MRC and were anxious for her to get in,” Miller said. “When she was able to make that transition, it was a happy day because we knew she was going to get the care she needed.”

A former high school salutatorian with a 4.0 grade point average at USM, Jasmine was “cognitively devastated” when she entered rehab, Evans said.

“She was essentially non-verbal,” remembers MRC speech therapist Shannon Watkins. “She could get words out, but she might look at you and say random words that didn't make sense.”

She had favorite repetitive phrases, too, including “free me” and “Coco going forward.”

Both spoke to her desire to be on her own again. But neuropsychological tests showed she needed full-time supervision.

“My first encounter with her, she was severely impaired, confused and disoriented,” Evans said. “She could not functionally communicate or read or write, and her judgment and reasoning were impaired.”

“We tried anything to get her to successfully communicate,” Watkins said. “We would listen to her favorite artists, and she would sway her head, clap her hands and she eventually began singing along. When she left, she was following commands and singing the alphabet.”

“We were able to see she was improving, and we encouraged Jasmine and her family to keep going with the rehab

process,” Evans said. “We definitely gave recommendations on how to get her back on track to graduate.”

“I WILL BE AT MY BEST”

Once she returned to Hattiesburg, Jasmine continued therapy. And she admits she wasn't all that nice to those who were trying to help her—including family and friends who had done everything from holding bedside vigils to staging community fundraisers.

“I gave them trouble,” Jasmine said. “I punched and hit and cried a lot if I didn't get my way. I knew I was being mean, but I couldn't stop it. I remember being angry because I was still stuck. That's why I kept carrying those letters, I wanted to go forward.”

Given Jasmine's go-getter personality, she needed someone to temper her ambitions. And through regular outpatient neuropsychological testing at MRC, Evans was able to provide an objective measure of her progress.

“She is one of those people who wants to leap tall buildings with a single

Returning to workout sessions with trainer Michael Frierson is one way Jasmine Whiteside got back to feeling more like herself.



From left, Jasmine Whiteside, Sharon Miles, Miss Rep. Toby Barker and Staci Cox—all at T-Bones, where they helped stage a fundraiser for Jasmine.



A longtime community volunteer, Jasmine Whiteside has enjoyed being able to help others again—like getting classrooms ready for students at Hawkins Elementary in Hattiesburg.



Jasmine Whiteside likes a challenge, whether it's in the classroom or at the gym.

bound. And she can get ahead of herself,” Evans said. “All I did was adjust her timetable a little bit.

“She always knew I was on her team. So if I said, ‘No, you’re not ready for this,’ she knew I had her best interest at heart, and I wasn’t trying to hold her back.”

“Everyone was interested in helping her,” said physical therapist Megan Glorioso. “I don’t think we’ll ever forget her.”

Miller said Jasmine even seemed to charm those who treated her while she was unconscious. “I would be like: ‘How can you still be charismatic in a coma?’” joked Miller.

Miller and Jasmine’s mother can now laugh at some of the most outrageous moments during her recovery.

Once, Jasmine escaped from her home and tried to flag down motorists to take her to the University of Pennsylvania, where she had done some summer research.

Another time, she left Miller’s house on a bicycle, headed once again for Pennsylvania. “We live two blocks from a major road and my husband had to jump in his car, run her off the road, tackle her and take her back to the house,” Miller said.

All in all, “it was like raising this girl all over again,” said Jasmine’s mother. “It didn’t take a week for her to come out of Pampers, then she started walking more. Each month it seemed like she advanced. Then she started progressing by years.”

A major advance came while Jasmine was attending adult daycare at The ARC of Southeast Mississippi in Hattiesburg. After some time as a program participant, she returned to her former role as an ARC volunteer.

Next, it was time to ease back into school, finally finish her degree and re-apply to graduate school.

While it was a risk, Jasmine was forthright in her applications.

“Sometimes they want you to name a significant happening in your life. And I literally just woke up out of a coma,” she said. “I had to explain it in a way that didn’t make me feel helpless. I didn’t want them to think I couldn’t handle the program.”

At Ohio State, Jasmine said she’ll receive support services if she needs them. And she has a grandmother nearby who can help out, too.

But her greatest advantage may be her belief that she has “the drive and focus” to succeed.

“That’s something I’ve always had, even after the sickness,” she said. “I might not be at the top of my class, like I probably would have been. But I think I will be at my best.”

And so do all who’ve watched Jasmine make her comeback.

“She made dramatic improvement over a long period of time and most people would have signed off on the case,” Evans said. “To see that journey over two years was amazing.”

THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION



Jasmine Whiteside chats with MRC neuropsychology director Dr. Clea Evans.

A significant factor in Jasmine Whiteside’s recovery was the guidance provided by MRC’s Neuropsychology Department.

Led by director Clea C. Evans, Ph.D., department staff members evaluate the impact of neurological injuries and illnesses and provide therapy and education to help patients and their families cope with cognitive, emotional or behavioral problems.

Their expertise helps determine treatment plans, as well as a patient’s readiness to return to school, work, driving or living independently.

Services provided on an inpatient and outpatient basis include:

- Standardized screening tests to identify the need for further evaluation or treatment
- Neuropsychological evaluations to measure general intelligence, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, attention, concentration, learning, memory, language, visual and spatial perception and motor, sensory and academic skills
- Baseline and repeat testing to benchmark progress
- Rehabilitation treatment planning
- Patient and family education
- Behavioral therapy to help patients and caregivers cope with cognitive, emotional and behavioral changes



Karlos Taylor

the ART of RECOVERY

MRC helps Mississippi College graphic design instructor get back to the classroom after a stroke

BY CAREY MILLER

AS A GRAPHIC DESIGN INSTRUCTOR AT MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE, Karlos Taylor relies on his artist's hand and his gift of gab to inspire students.

But after a stroke last year, he found himself stripped of those gifts and unsure if he would ever get them back.

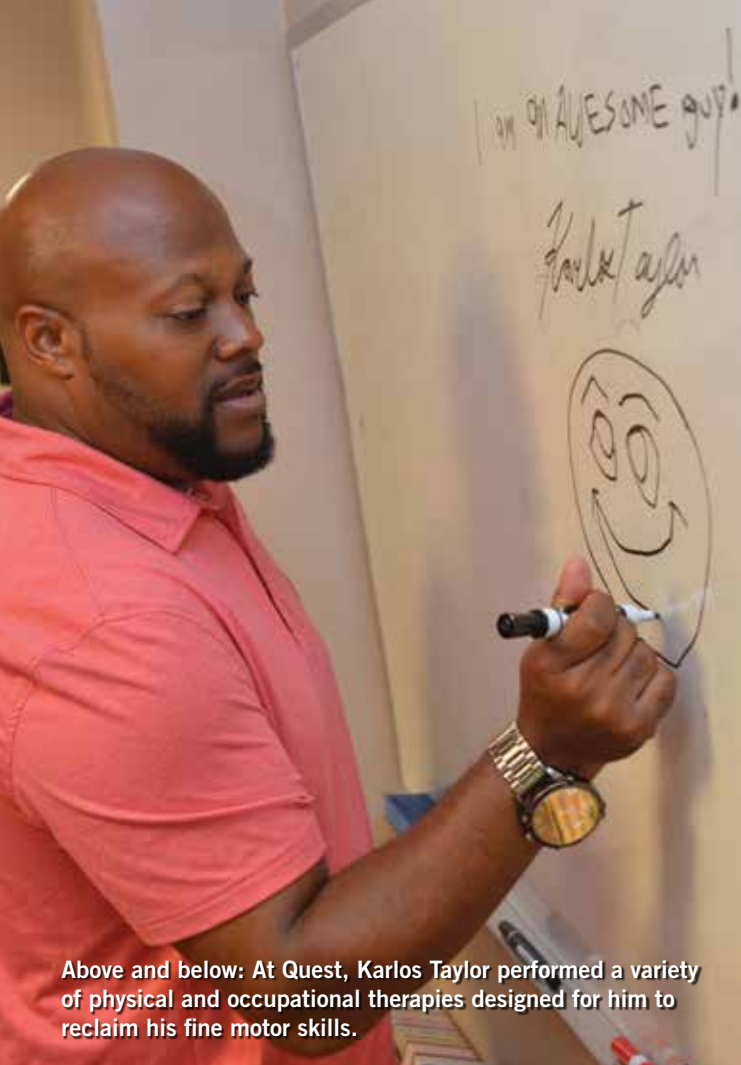
Everything seemed normal the night of Oct. 26, 2015. Taylor had been having some headaches, but attributed them to the stress of his job.

"But as I was going to bed, I felt very dizzy," Taylor said.

Soon, Taylor couldn't move his right arm or leg and collapsed to the floor. He could barely speak or breathe. His sister called 911, and he was rushed to St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson.

"It was pouring down rain that night and as they carried me out on a stretcher, I could feel the drops hitting the left side of my face but not the right," he said. "I thought, 'Why can't I feel it?'"

Taylor had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, a devastating type of stroke caused by a blood vessel rupturing and bleeding inside the brain.



Above and below: At Quest, Karlos Taylor performed a variety of physical and occupational therapies designed for him to reclaim his fine motor skills.

“My kids look up to me. I knew if they could see me draw again and working on the computer again, they would know I was going to be OK.”
—Karlos Taylor

“I was in and out for days, I didn’t know what was going on,” Taylor said. “I kept waking up in a different place and seeing different people. At one point I overheard someone say that I had a stroke, and I thought: ‘Am I going to be able to walk again?’”

He was in a wheelchair when he started therapy at Methodist Rehabilitation Center, some two weeks after his stroke.

“The first thing they told me when I got to MRC was to rest well the first night because you’re about to work,” Taylor said. “And that was the truth!”

DO YOU LIKE VIDEO GAMES?

With the help of physical therapist Megan Glorioso and occupational therapist Chuck Crenshaw, Taylor began the work of overcoming his deficits.

“His right side was really weak and very uncoordinated and rigid early on,” Crenshaw said. “He had a lot of trouble with his vision—which was a problem for him because he’s a graphic designer and loves video games. All the things he likes to do are visual.”

“From a physical therapy perspective, his proprioception—that is, awareness of his own limbs—was pretty much nonexistent in his right leg,” Glorioso said.

Taylor said he was a bit surprised at some of the therapies devised for him.

“The first time I saw Chuck, he asked me, ‘Do you like video games?’” Taylor said. “And I said, ‘Are you kidding me?’”

MRC therapists often use the Nintendo Wii video game system, which uses a motion controller, to help patients regain motor control.

“We encouraged him to play video games because it would help him work on his right hand and his visual perception,” Crenshaw said. “He made real sure that his girlfriend heard me say that.”

Brianna Turner, his girlfriend, was a cheerleader for Taylor during his therapy. “She was a very instrumental part of my recovery,” he said. “She encouraged me by writing scriptures on my dry erase board every day.”

His two sons, Avery, 11, and Keagan, 9, were also an inspiration.





Mississippi College graphic design instructor Karlos Taylor works with graduate student Xin Jiang on a project during a class.

“My kids look up to me—my youngest wants to be an artist just like me,” he said. “But they know me by my drawing. And I knew if they could see me draw again and working on the computer again, they would know I was going to be OK.”

Taylor wasn’t confident he could grip a pencil well, much less sketch like he could before his stroke. But one day in therapy, Crenshaw insisted that Taylor try his hand at painting.

“And I painted a Ninja Turtle—Leonardo,” said Taylor, who is also a huge fan of comic books. “At that point, everyone in the gym was watching what I was doing and it made me feel so inspired. I thought, ‘There is hope for me now.’”

Crenshaw then gave Taylor a sketchbook that he and his sons took turns drawing in.

“The more I did that, the more they became confident in my recovery,” he said.

A VICTORY DANCE

Getting back on his feet also helped show his boys that dad was going to be OK.

“He was in a wheelchair when he got here and needed maximum assistance to walk,” Glorioso said. “But by the time he left, he was walking mostly with supervision. He made some fast progress while he was here.”

Glorioso used mirror therapy to help Taylor recognize how he was moving his leg. And after finding out that he loved to dance, she incorporated it into his therapy to get him moving.

“I don’t really want to have this publicized, but I guess if I don’t tell it, they will,” Taylor said. “When I was getting ready

to leave inpatient, I danced. I did the Nae Nae. And they videotaped me doing it. It was like a victory dance. And it goes to show that they’ll think of anything to make you better.”

CUMBERSOME POETRY

After leaving inpatient rehab, Taylor enrolled at Quest, MRC’s comprehensive outpatient program for people with brain or spinal injuries who wish to make a successful return to work, school or home life.

“I had to make a list of my goals when I got there,” Taylor said. “I feel like my therapists at Quest would have done anything to help me reach them.”

One goal was to continue to strengthen his right side, and physical therapist Patricia Oyarce pushed him to reach his potential.

“She would always ask, ‘Are you feeling it?’” Taylor said. “If I was brave enough to say no, she would go to great lengths to reposition me so I could feel it in target muscle groups. She referred to them as ‘sweet spots’—they must have been sweetened with Stevia, because they had a bitter aftertaste.”

His sights were also set on getting back to his teaching post at MC, so he began working with speech therapist Cassie Means.

“Our primary focus was his speech output—his articulation,” Means said. “We practiced that and worked on his speech rate, getting him to slow down to make his speech clearer. We also worked on his endurance, because he said he was getting fatigued easily.”



Karlos Taylor proudly shows off the Transformers collection displayed in his office at Mississippi College.

“God chose to keep me here. I think He still has things He wants me to accomplish.”
—**Karlos Taylor**



Karlos Taylor worked on his lecturing with Quest speech therapist Cassie Means.



Karlos Taylor helps graduate student Key Wang with a class project.



Above and below: On the day of his graduation from Quest, Karlos Taylor gathered with his therapists, family and friends. Back row, from left: Paxton Payton, Bilal Qizilbash and former Quest psychologist Danny Burgess. Middle row, from left: Physical therapist Patricia Oyarce, occupational therapist Allison Harris, Taylor, Taylor's girlfriend Brianna Turner and speech therapist Cassie Means. Front row, from left: Taylor's sons Avery and Keagan.



Taylor said speaking clearly was very important to him as he teaches a number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

"She would have me do mock lectures and would give me feedback on how I was doing, testing my endurance, clarity and things like that," Taylor said. "She even had me reciting poetry! Now, that is cumbersome."

"He recovered greatly," Means said. "He was very proactive, and any suggestion I had he would take it to heart. He always gave 110 percent."

Taylor also wanted to get back to using a computer for graphic design, a goal his physical and occupational therapists worked together on to help him achieve.

Oyarce employed Interactive Metronome (IM) training. During this therapy, the user dons headphones and synchronizes hand or foot movements to a computer-generated tempo.

"IM improves attention, motor planning and sequencing," Oyarce said. "Fine motor skills are so important for working on the computer."

Occupational therapist Allison Harris helped pair him with some adaptive computing equipment.

"I was having trouble using a mouse again, so she introduced me to a vertical mouse, which made it easier for me to click," Taylor said. "I finished my first graphic design piece since my stroke after about two months of going to Quest."

Taylor "graduated" from the Quest program on June 3 and returned to teaching the same month.

"I'm glad to be back to work, and I'm playing video games again like a fiend," he said. "My kids and I play together quite a bit."

A LIVING TESTAMENT

Taylor's ordeal has led him to reflect on what caused his stroke.

Now 40, he was diagnosed with hypertension at the age of 36, and had been controlling the condition with medication.

"I stopped taking my blood pressure meds," Taylor admits. "I thought I was Superman. I thought I was feeling OK. But I was ignoring the fact that I was having repeated headaches, because I thought they were from the pressure of my job."

High blood pressure is called "the silent killer" because it often has no clear symptoms.

"My father died of a heart attack brought on by high blood pressure when I was 5," he said. "When I had my stroke, I thought of him."

Taylor hopes his story can serve as a warning to others who struggle with hypertension to monitor their health closely.

"I'm living by the mantra of 'know your numbers' now," he said. "And if I have to eat nothing but leaves to stay right, I'll eat them."

Taylor feels like he has been given a second chance by the grace of God, and says he wouldn't have made it without the support of his girlfriend, his kids, his sister and his church, New Vision Fellowship in Brandon.

"Every day I was in the hospital, someone from my church family would visit me," he said.

"God chose to keep me here. I think He still has things He wants me to accomplish, like be there for my kids. I'm a living testament for them of the power of prayer." 🙏

REHAB WORKS

In June 2016, the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association published "Guidelines for Adult Stroke Rehabilitation and Recovery," a report that detailed the importance of rehab following a stroke. Here are some interesting facts from the report.

35.8%

The drop in the relative rate of stroke deaths in the United States between 2000 and 2010, when postacute stroke rehab became more prevalent

"There is **strong evidence** that organized, interprofessional stroke care not only reduces mortality rates and the likelihood of institutional care and long-term disability but also **enhances recovery and increases independence** in activities of daily living."

3 hours

"Subjects who received greater than 3 hours of therapy daily made significantly more functional gains than those receiving less than 3 hours daily."

Inpatient rehabilitation facility patients have higher rates of return to community living and greater functional recovery,

whereas patients discharged to an skilled nursing facility or a nursing home have higher rehospitalization rates and substantially poorer survival."

Sam Lane, Jr. inspects the veggies at the Up In Farms Food Hub.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

A look at what some MRC alumni have done since they left the therapy gym

by Susan Christensen

SAM LANE, JR.

"I'm a vegetarian."

That was one of Sam Lane, Jr.'s first sentences as he recovered from a brain-injuring bike crash in 2007.

Now, those words seem prophetic.

In August, the 31-year-old Jackson resident joined an initiative to bring farm-fresh local produce to area grocers, restaurants and homes—a return to his roots, so to speak.

A project coordinator with Up In Farms Food Hub located in the old Farmer's Market building on West Street, Lane travels the state sourcing produce from independent farmers. These wares are then processed and distributed via Community Supported Agriculture boxes.

If not for Methodist Rehabilitation Center, Lane imagines his current duties might be out of reach. After being hit by a drunk driver in Athens, Ga., the then University of Georgia student awoke from a five-week coma to find his right side partially paralyzed.

His parents brought him back home to Jackson to benefit from MRC's nationally recognized brain injury rehabilitation program. And Lane walked out of the center some two months later.

More outpatient therapy followed and Lane said he was able to fine-tune his abilities via MRC's weight-supported treadmill system.

"It allowed me to regain my stability and mobility, which is why I can now walk on uneven terrain," he said. "For instance, a lot of people who are physically handicapped are unable to walk out in the middle of a field of squash."

A frequent traveler before his accident, Lane also is "back at it again." He and his father, Sam Lane, Sr., vice chairman of MRC's Wilson Research Foundation, recently went to California for the Desert Trip festival featuring Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones and more.

And an adventurous Lane returned home via a 49-plus hour train ride from Los Angeles to New Orleans.

To learn more, go to facebook.com/upinfarms. 🌱

ROBERT CASSIDY

Ten years ago, Ruleville High School football player Robert Cassidy left a game against rival Gentry High School of Indianola on a stretcher.

After that night, he would never play—or walk—again.

But this year he was back on the field as the Delta teams went head-to-head in the newly christened Robert Cassidy Unity Bowl.

The game was renamed to honor Cassidy's courage and perseverance in the wake of a spinal cord injury that left him a quadriplegic at age 16.

In the years since, he has earned a business administration degree at Delta State University in Cleveland, become a substitute teacher for schools in Sunflower County and is studying to earn a real estate license.

He also is a motivational speaker, using his experience to encourage others to overcome hardships.

Staff at Methodist Rehabilitation Center did the same for him as he adjusted to a life-changing injury. And Cassidy says he'll always be "appreciative and grateful, not only to MRC, but the whole metro Jackson area."

"They embraced a 16-year-old Delta kid and took me in as their own," he said. "It was a great experience looking back. They instilled good qualities in me, like a work ethic. And they always encouraged me to keep going and to keep smiling."

At the end of the Sept. 2 Ruleville-Gentry game, Cassidy was flashing his trademark grin as he took in the final score.

"Ruleville won a trophy for me and that was the first time they beat Gentry in a long, long time," he said. "One kid came to me with tears in his eyes and said: 'We did it!'"



LAKEYSHA GREER ISAAC

LaKeysha Greer Isaac remembers 2005 as one of the toughest times of her life.

Stricken with Guillain Barré Syndrome, the Jackson lawyer spent months struggling to overcome the rare disease that temporarily paralyzes its victims.

"I was working to be able to walk down the aisle at my beach wedding in May, 2006," she said. "They had a little wheelchair with beach wheels off to the side in case I needed it. But I looked at it and said I would not be getting in it on my wedding day



of all days."

Isaac's stubborn persistence served her well during inpatient and outpatient therapy at Methodist Rehabilitation Center. And she attained a level of recovery that has allowed her to excel in professional and community pursuits.

She was named a partner at Cosmich Simmons & Brown in 2007 and now travels the nation as a specialist in complex litigation and product liability defense.

She also is a past board chair of Goodwill Industries of Mississippi and past president of the Rho Lambda Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

Isaac now serves as vice president of membership for the Junior League of Jackson and was recently honored for her community service by Dress for Success Metro Jackson.

Isaac said her illness reminded her of the importance of giving back and helped renew her desire to serve the Jackson community. And she's forever grateful for the MRC staff who helped her recover.

"I still fondly remember the support I got while I was there and the way it came in different forms. With some, I got tough love because it's probably what I needed. With others, I was treated tenderly.

"It was that balance of tough love with true sweetness that made Methodist such an important part of my recovery, especially when combined with the incredible support I received from family, friends and colleagues."

PATRICK SCHOOLAR

Patrick Schoolar was just 25 years old when a hunting accident introduced him to the world of prosthetic limbs.

Twelve years later, the football coach says his high-tech right leg "is just part of life now."

And it's definitely an active life, now that he's keeping up with Piper, his 5-year-old daughter, and Talan, his 3-year-old son.

A Noxapater High School defensive coordinator at the time of his amputation, Schoolar has gone on to post a number of career successes.

In 2013, he became head coach at his alma mater, Hatley High School in Monroe County, and took the team to its first playoff appearance in the school's history.

This year, he became head coach at Neshoba Central in Philadelphia, Miss.

Methodist Orthotics & Prosthetics has been Schoolar's go-to resource ever since his accident. And he says the staff there has been central to his success.

"They are the greatest in the world in my book," he said. "No matter where I live, I will always be a patient of Methodist O&P."





Corey Griffin, far left, manager of dietary services at MRC, walks at the 2016 Walk & Roll with his daughter Mari Ashlyn, wife Bridgette and son Carter.



Artist's rendering of the new donor recognition wall for the Wilson Research Foundation.



Bike Crossing owner Linda Bartley presents a check for \$17,000 to Chris Blount of the Wilson Research Foundation. The proceeds are from the 2016 100 Miles of Mayhem bike ride. Also pictured, from left, are committee members Michelle Conley, Gary Armstrong, Michael Bartley, Mike MacGown and Arash Sepehri.

Restore ability

with your gift to the Wilson Research Foundation

by Chris Blount

Big things are going on in the research program at Methodist Rehabilitation Center. We are increasing our research space to 4,500 square feet, adding staff and acquiring cutting edge robotic therapy equipment.

Exciting times, indeed!

The facility improvements are provided through a trust gift by the late Leo Seal. And to fund the direct cost of research, the Wilson Research Foundation has raised and granted close to \$1.5 million over the past two years alone. And we are working to raise another \$700,000 by mid-2017. MRC's Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery will now be in a much better position to harness exciting new technologies and launch new studies to help patients recover more meaningfully and quickly.

We are particularly excited about the addition of a Neuro Robotics Lab and the hiring of Dr. Keith Tansey. He is working in a collaborative relationship with the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery Veterans Affairs Medical Center, MRC and the University of Mississippi Medical Center, and this is part of a continuum of care for traumatic spinal cord injured patients from initial trauma all the way through rehab (see story on page 26). Tansey joins MRC researchers to carry out innovative research involving our patients, and this will be funded by your gifts to the Wilson Foundation.

Suzy Gonzales, MRC director of inpatient therapy, understands how research elevates our clinical programs.

"These are very exciting times," she said. "With this advanced technology, our therapists and researchers will work

closely together to fulfill our mission to enhance the lives of those we serve."

How is it that we have been able to build such a program that makes discoveries and drives innovation at MRC? The answer is that every year, hundreds of generous individuals, foundations and businesses are investing in this program. Our events such as the Walk & Roll and the 100 Miles of Mayhem bike ride are a great testimony to the energy and momentum our research foundation is building.

On April 2, MRC patients, employees, volunteers and sponsors gathered on the grounds of Methodist Specialty Care Center in Flowood for the 7th Annual Walk & Roll.

Team Karen, co-captained by Karen Skeen and Keith Ferguson, was the first place team in fundraising with \$8,000 in

cash and in-kind contributions. The first place MRC employee team was Team Outpatient Rehab, led by Heather Wise.

The Bike Crossing's 100 Miles of Mayhem—A Century Ride was held on June 11. Proceeds from this annual event benefit the foundation, and more than 50 MRC employees volunteered on a blazing hot Saturday to keep riders fed and hydrated along the 100 mile course. Bike Crossing owners Linda, Robert and Michael Bartley presented the Wilson Foundation with \$17,000 in ride proceeds, to be used for stroke research using the Armeo Spring robotic therapy system for hand/arm recovery. This Ridgeland-based small business has given over \$48,000 to date, and the committee is already working on the next Mayhem ride to be held on June 10, 2017.

We want to honor your gifts. We recognize gifts in this magazine (pages 50-54) and we have created a beautiful new wall display (see left) which is being installed at MRC along our second floor atrium near the bronze statue of Earl R. Wilson.

To sustain and grow this program, we need your continued support. Research is a key reason why we are recognized as a center of excellence, resulting in tens of thousands of Mississippians overcoming disabling obstacles and getting back to their lives. We hope you will make an annual gift, and consider us in your will. As Earl Wilson said, "With your help, there are no limits." 🍀

www.wilsonfoundation.org

WALK & ROLL FUNDRAISING HEROES

Top 10 Teams:

1. Team Karen \$8,000 (Co-captains: Karen Skeen and Keith Ferguson)
2. Outpatient Rehab \$7,580 (Captain: Heather Wise)
3. Team Earl \$6,625 (Captain: Virginia Wilson Mounger)
4. Orthotics & Prosthetics \$1,975 (Captain: Luly Johnson)
5. Rally for Research \$1,933 (Captain: Bonnie Perry)
6. The Pillars \$1,819 (Captain: Brenda Willis)
7. Team Specialty Care \$1,798 (Captain: Amy Dempsey)
8. The Rowdy Rehabbers \$1,415 (Co-Captains: Tina Weaver, Megan Mikula and Melissa Byrd)
9. Rehab Rocketts \$1,242 (Captain: Linda Tynes)
10. Record Team \$1,015 (Captain: Mary Montana)

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RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

MRC researchers are denoted in blue type

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IN MEMORY

Earlier this year, we were deeply saddened at the loss of Martha Lyles Wilson, the wife of MRC founding chairman Earl R. Wilson. The Wilson Research Foundation was named to honor Earl and Martha for their extraordinary service to help people overcome disabling obstacles. Earl, who passed away in 2000, served as chairman of the MRC trustees for 25 years.

Martha Lyles Wilson was a remarkable woman with a huge heart for this mission and ministry. From the earliest days of organizing fashion shows and bake sales to raise funds, we regarded Martha as the matriarch of MRC, and a true visionary for the Wilson Research Foundation, for which she served on the board for many years. We miss Martha terribly, yet we celebrate her legacy. She made a profound difference in the lives of countless Mississippians.



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Now I can...

rise to the challenge



After her estranged husband shot her and killed himself, Jamecca Jones faced a daunting challenge.

The Jackson hairstylist needed to return to work to support her three kids. But she didn't know how she'd manage the job as a paraplegic.

Then staff at Methodist Rehabilitation Center custom fit Jones with a standing wheelchair that lets her rise to her feet and reach her customers. And through therapy and counseling at MRC, she gained the skills and confidence to reclaim her independence.

"They helped me regain some things I felt like I had lost and made me believe in myself more," Jones said. But she was always the type to persevere.

"I don't easily give up on what I want to do," Jones said. "Life goes on whether I'm in a wheelchair or not. I've got kids who depend on me."



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