Ira L. Myers Scholarship - Approximate Value $6,000.00

In conjunction with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health, AlPHA announces the availability of the Ira L. Myers Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to honor Ira L. Myers, former Alabama State Health Officer, for his 40 years of dedicated service to the citizens of the State of Alabama.

The Ira L. Myers Scholarship, funded by AlPHA and the UAB School of Public Health, supports one master's or doctoral candidate for two years of part-time study at the UAB School of Public Health. The scholarship is not intended to cover all costs related to the graduate experience. It does provide tuition and a monthly stipend to cover related expenses up to $6,000.00.

Eligibility requirements for the Myers Scholarship include membership in the Alabama Public Health Association (www.alphassoc.org) and acceptance by the UAB School of Public Health to an advanced degree program.

Completed applications (the application process takes 2-4 weeks) for either the master's or doctoral program must be received by the UAB School of Public Health by **February 1, 2007.** To apply for the scholarship, request an application packet from:

Linda Mosley
UAB School of Public Health
Office of Student and Academic Services
RPHB 130
1665 University Boulevard
Birmingham, Ala. 35294-0022
Phone: (205) 934.7179

You can apply for admission on line at www.uab.edu/publichealth and download a tuition assistance application to apply for the scholarship at http://images.main.uab.edu/isoph/Admissions/20052006finapp.pdf.

Questions about admission to the UAB School of Public Health and the Ira L. Myers Scholarship should be directed to Linda Mosley or Ashvin Parikh at (334) 874-2550, e-mail: aparikh@adph.state.al.us .

A Message from the AlPHA Partnership Committee

One of the roles of the Alabama Public Health Association, Inc. is to link individuals and organizations and address public health issues in Alabama.

New partners may join the association's efforts to support the education of members and the public regarding health issues. Partners may choose to advocate public health policy; and address personal, community and environmental health promotion and protection concerns.

Partnerships between businesses, professional organizations, academia, community organizations, non-profit organizations, state agencies external to the health department, and other organizations offer an endless variety of mutual benefits.

AlPHA's network allows partners to engage in a participatory and inclusive process. Partnerships create an excellent opportunity for providing technical assistance, and for capacity building. Resources are shared through collaborative sponsorships of annually meetings. A partnership with AlPHA expands links to communities, communications, data and analysis, educational curriculum, and materials.

It's time to begin a partnership with ALPHA today!

By KYLE REYNOLD, EdD
Partnership Committee Chair

Consider making an awards nomination

Now is the time to begin thinking about the person or group from anywhere in the state who should receive recognition for a special contribution to public health. Nominees can be an individual or group who should be recognized as having made a difference in Alabama's public health. A nomination form will need to be submitted by March 1, 2006, along with support letters honoring this special person/group who is deserving of an award. The awards will be presented during the 50th Annual AlPHA Health Education Conference in Birmingham.

For more information contact Ruth Harrell, R.N., M.P.H., Awards Committee Chair, P.O. Box 626, Flomaton, Ala. 36441, telephone (251) 296-5101 or e-mail rharrell@panhandle.rr.com.

AlPHA Conference/Professional Leadership Day to meet with AEHA May 16-18

Mark your calendars now! The Alabama Public Health Association will meet jointly with the Alabama Environmental Health Association at the Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile May 16-18, 2007. Further details will be announced in the next issue.

Alabama Public Health Association, Inc.
New/Renewal Application Form

Email Address: _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Name _____

AlPHA Name (if different from above) _____Daytime Phone: _____

Agency/Organization _____ Area/County/Office/Bureau _____ Branch/Subunit _____

Address_____City_____State____Zip_____

Section Affiliation, (1 by primary section, 2 by secondary section)

01 Community Health Advocacy_____ 03 Preventive Health_____

02 Community Health Leadership____ 04 Community Health Partnerships_____

ADPH employees are encouraged to pay dues through payroll deduction. Social Security number is needed for payroll deduction

I would like payroll deduction: _____ _____

SS # (_ _ _ - _ _ - _ _ _ _) Signature (required for payroll deduction)

Recruited by: _____

Send this form (and check if not payroll deducted) to:
Alabama Public Health Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 990, Montgomery, AL 36101-0990

Checks Payable to Alabama Public Health Association
Individual Dues $24.00 ~ Corporate Membership $350.00 ~ Student Membership $5.00

Alabama Public Health Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 990, Montgomery, Alabama 36101-0990

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UAB
Max Michael, MD

AlPHA Web Site:
www.alphassoc.org

Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 990
Montgomery, Ala.
36101-0990

Newsletter Editor
Arrol Sheehan

President's Message

My last cup of coffee was my first taste of public health. That was a few days over 30 years ago when I sat down to be interviewed by County Health Officer Dr. John D. Rayfield and surmised that I could sip a little black java if it humored the man who was about to offer me the job that was coveted by my wife's bridesmaid's brother and by the fiancée of the girl who lived next to me at college.

Talk about your small world! Nonetheless, Dr. Rayfield offered the position to a young man from Childersburg whose main memory of the Health Department was the typhoid shot administered to him by Nurse Margaret Hill after the floods of 1962 contaminated our city's water supply. And after inspecting the "worst county jail in the state" on my first day at work, I wondered if I was cut out for this job. It may have been an inauspicious beginning, but it has turned out to be a most rewarding career.

So as I begin my "next 30 years of service in public health," it is a great honor and privilege to serve you as President of the Alabama Public Health Association. AlPHA has always been there for me in these 30 years. I look forward to being there for you in this coming year.

During this time, I have been the beneficiary of the professional organization which champions the work and service of the champions in the various public health disciplines that make up the body of Public Health in Alabama. Each discipline and every person within AlPHA is unique, yet a vital part of our organization and the public health body. We have the common mission to assure adequate health care, promote healthy living, provide educational foundations, prevent the spread of disease and protect our fragile environment as we serve and teach with quality and integrity.

In pondering the strength that this unity yet diversity brings to the public health profession and our organization, I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul said: "Now God has placed the members, each one of them in the body, as it has pleased him. And if they were all the same part, where would the body be? Now there are many members, yet one body. So the eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" nor can the head say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ...And those members of the body, that we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor.... So that there would be no division in the body; but that the members would have the same care for each other."

Now as much as ever, AlPHA needs each of its members and each member needs AlPHA. In similar fashion, AlPHA needs all those public health champions who are not currently members; and they need the strength and care that AlPHA can provide.

In a year where you have entrusted the guidance of AlPHA to one in the public health discipline of environmental health, it is my pleasure to announce to you that AlPHA and AEHA (the Alabama Environmental Health Association -- my other special professional organization) are working together to hold a joint annual educational conference on May 16-18, 2007, in Mobile. While the details are not quite final, I am already enthused and encouraged by the cooperation and ideas of the joint planning committee.

Finally, I want to especially thank Past President Ashvin Parikh, President-Elect Ricky Elliott, Treasurer John Hooper and a host of other AlPHA leaders for their outstanding service and devotion to AlPHA this past year. They and those like them are indeed the heart, soul and mind of AlPHA. For myself, I will strive to be the eyes that look forward; the big toe that balances us; and whatever part of the body I need to be to serve you. Please join me in this most worthy endeavor in this 51st year of AlPHA!

Lem Burell
President

ALPHA Honors Professionals with Awards, Scholarship

The Alabama Public Health Association recognized persons from across the state who demonstrated exceptional merit in the field of public health. The following individuals were presented awards on May 3, 2006, at the association's Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Radisson Hotel in Birmingham.

Charlotte Plumb, environmental supervisor with the Baldwin County Health Department, was presented the Frederick S. Wolf Award, which goes to an individual active in public health at the local level for more than 10 years and who has demonstrated efficiency, dedication and professionalism in the delivery of public health service and has provided unselfish community service in areas unrelated to public health.

Charlotte Plumb receives award from Ricky Elliott

Her nominator praised her for turning "her personal energy into developing and creating new programs aimed toward improving living conditions for one of the state's fastest growing counties."

Among her many accomplishments are helping develop local rules for the regulation of public swimming pools, which involved hours of preparation, negotiation and networking with community organizations. She also worked on developing a comprehensive mosquito control program and the Baldwin County Animal Shelter.

A supporter stated, "Charlotte's dedication to the service of others has significantly impacted the lives of countless persons in a very positive manner."

The Guy M. Tate Award was presented to **Jamie Manning**, regional coordinator of the Children's Health Insurance Program in Public Health Area IX. This award is presented annually to a public health employee, group or agency with 10 years or less service for contributions to public health beyond the job assignment, which promote and protect public health in Alabama.

Jamie Manning

A letter of nomination describes her as "having an enthusiasm for public health" and praises "her capacity to think beyond the confines of her daily tasks." Her work role as a field representative for ALL Kids allows her to show her genuine concern for children and their families. Described as "a breath of fresh air" and an "out-of-the-box thinker," she is respected and appreciated by all who know her.

Barbara Mack, coordinator of the State J-1 Physician Waiver Program, was selected as the recipient of the Virginia Kendrick Award. This prestigious award goes to an individual who has provided notable service to the people of Alabama while serving in a supportive position in public health.

The recipient should exemplify such qualifies as loyalty and dedication to public health, friendly, unselfish cooperation with coworkers, enthusiasm and conscientiousness in job performance, and expertise in the practice of effective public relations. One of her letters of support regarded her as an "excellent employee who understands the need for professional, organized responses to any issue and relates to all that she encounters with the greatest of ease and poise."

A nominator said, "Mrs. Mack is an exceptionally motivated, capable and conscientious person whose outstanding record of accomplishments has profoundly improved the quality of life for both her co-workers and the people of rural Alabama."

Debbie Thomasson, M.S., R.N., area nursing director for Public Health Areas VII and IX, was presented the D.G. Gill Award. This prestigious award is given to an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to public health in Alabama which is statewide in scope. A supporter described her as "insightful, logical, intuitive, smart, witty, empathetic, sensitive and trustworthy" and commented she "does not skirt issues but faces them head on if necessary." A letter of nomination praised her "positive impact on public health in Alabama felt throughout her years of service," especially during her time of transition between state and area responsibilities.

Ruth Underwood, area administrator for Public Health Area IX, was honored with the Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence. The Myers Award was established in 1986 to recognize an individual, group or organization that, through excellence in their work, has made a significant impact upon some aspect of public health in Alabama. The nominee should represent excellence in effort and significant achievement toward the promotion and protection of public health.

Her nominator said, "Ruth has been innovative in her approach to secure new sources of funding." Commenting on her leadership, he said, "When you have a leader of Ruth's caliber you find yourself giving 110 percent to achieve shared goals, to catch the vision, to make a difference. She leads in a positive, encouraging manner that enables and equips her employees to be public health catalysts."

The letter of nomination further stated, "Not once have I seen her lose her zeal for public health. As more and more is needed of her, she has more and more to give. The barrel never seems to run dry."

It was also announced that **Mary Wesley** is the recipient of the Ira L. Myers Scholarship to the University of Alabama at Birmingham. A graduate of Mississippi State University, she is pursuing a master's degree in public health and has expressed an interest in pursuing a public health career.

Barbara Mack is shown receiving award from Deborah Jones

Debbie Thomasson receives award from Jackie Holliday

Dr. Albert White presents award to Ruth Underwood

Iconoclast to Icon

Somewhere in history Dr. John Snow the *iconoclast* morphed into Dr. John Snow the *icon*. This stubbornly curious 19th century English doctor blasted established medical thought to become the Father of Public Health. In the 21st century he boasts his own website, pub, and thousands of faithful followers.

I can't help but imagine that Dr. Snow would be mortified by what public health is today. We may pay homage to his iconoclastic legacy, yet we remain mired in 19th century thinking about improving the health and well being of the public.

Snow was a public health activist, driven to save lives by challenging the way doctors thought. His unease with the customary thinking about the cause of disease gave rise to ideas about health and disease that garnered dramatic gains in personal productivity and longevity echoing across centuries. He refused to embrace accepted ideas, choosing instead the prickly discomfort of unconventional thinking, what we like to call " thinking outside the box."

But, that was more than 150 years ago.

Public health faces an ever burgeoning array of new challenges from the epidemics of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease to social injustices of heath disparities, medical un-insurance, and substance abuse.

Can 19th strategies work for 21st century dilemmas? Does modern public health now embody an established way of thinking about health and prevent disease that is 150 years old? Have we become so diligent about an ever-expanding role, often primarily through regulations, for public health that we prevent ourselves from seeing new ways to improve health? And, has our expanded role led to an overly diffused profession that is increasingly ineffective in promoting health and preventing disease?

We must step back a bit to renew the traditions of a thoughtful, creative, and dynamic public health. Perhaps rather than accepting and spending millions on trying to change the foibles of the human species, we should revel in everything *unconventional* with the avowed hope here is where we will find the next iconoclast. Maybe then, John Snow will rest in peace.

MAX MICHAEL, M.D.
UAB School of Public Health

Ruth Underwood receives SHA Howell Special Meritorious Service Award

The Southern Health Association's Howell Award for Service to public health recognizes an individual for outstanding and continuous service, involvement with and support of public health including the impact of efforts on the community, involvement with their state public health association, and personal traits/characteristics.

Ruth Underwood, area administrator for Public Health Area IX, "truly meets these guidelines." The majority of her counties are rural, which poses a challenging barrier in that, historically, rural counties do not have the resources, manpower, support or opportunities that exist in the more urban counties.

A nominator said, "She has not let these challenges serve as stumbling blocks, instead she has used them as stepping stones." Her impact can be seen in nutrition, WIC, Environmental program, STD prevention, free medications, flu clinics and immunizations. She has served on countless boards, committees and coalitions with one goal in mind, improving the overall health of her fellow citizens.

One of her major impacts on efforts in the community was last summer during Hurricane Katrina. Just after the storm had passed a migration pattern quickly emerged wherein certain patients were discharged from coastal Mississippi hospitals to create bed space for critically ill and injured patients.

These patients ultimately ended up in one her counties. She quickly coordinated resources in the community. The result was a medical volunteer force comprised of community physicians and other medical and social service providers making rounds at the shelter and at an evening physician-staffed sick call clinic in the local health department. This was augmented by citizens who volunteered to provide food, clothing and other necessities.

Ms. Underwood has served in numerous capacities in Alabama including president. She has been recognized with the Guy M. Tate Award in 1993, the D.B. Gill Award in 1995 and this year she was presented the Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence.

"Ruth approaches each task and challenge with a 'can do' attitude. She has the distinct ability to grow leaders." In one of the letters of support, it was stated, "It has truly been a once in a lifetime privilege for me to call Ruth mentor and friend. Observing her distinguished service has instilled within me a desire to strive for excellence that otherwise I would have never had."

By SANDRA WHITTLE
Southern Health Association

How to reach your officers and board memebers

State Health Officer
Dr. Donald Williamson
201 Monroe Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-5200
DrDonaldEWilliamson@adph.state.al.us

Dr. Max Michael, Dean
UAB SOPH
1530 3rd Ave. S
Birmingham, AL 35294
205-975-7742
maxm@uab.edu

President
Lem Burell
P.O. Box 4699
Anniston, AL 36204
256-236-3274
256-237-7974 fax
lburell@adph.state.al.us

President Elect
Ricky Elliott
1115 Azalea Place
Brewton, AL 36426
251-867-5765
251-867-5179 fax
relliott@adph.state.al.us

Vice President/Program
Albert Woolbright, Ph.D.
Center for Health Statistics
201 Monroe St., Suite 1100
334-206-2694
awoolbright@adph.state.al.us

Immediate Past President/Scholarship
Ashvin Parikh
100 Samuel Moseley Drive
Selma, AL 36701
334-874-2550
334-872-4948 fax
aparikh@adph.state.al.us

Recording Secretary
Niko Phillips
100 Samuel Moseley Drive
Selma, AL 36701
334-874-2550
334-875-7960 fax
nphillips@adph.state.al.us

Corresponding Secretary
Annette Fagan
Public Health Area 6
256-236-3274
256-237-7974 fax
afagan@adph.state.al.us

Treasurer
John Hooper
2000 County Services Drive
Pelham, AL 35124
205-620-1650
205-664-3164 fax
jhooper@adph.state.al.us

Community Partnership
Kyle Reynold, Ed.D.
201 Monroe St., Suite 900
Montgomery, AL 36130
205-206-2062
(334) 206-5534 fax
kreynold@adph.state.al.us

Community Advocacy Chair
Dollie Hambrick
201 Monroe St., Suite 1010
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-5226
dhambrick@adph.state.al.us

Community Advocacy Vice Chair/IT Committee Chair
Michael Jones
201 Monroe St., Suite 852
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-5264
mjones@adph.state.al.us

Leadership Section Chair
Debbie Thomasson
Public Area IX
22070 Hwy 59
Box 1227
Robertsdale, AL 36567
251-947-6206
dthomasson@adph.state.al.us

Leadership Section Vice Chair
Chastsie Hooper
RSA Tower, Suite 1010
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-7942
Chastsie Hooper/DPH@ADPH

Preventive Health Chair
Dr. Isaac M.T. Mwase
Natl. Center for Bioethics in Research & Health Care
Bioethics Center Building 44-114
Tuskegee, AL 36088
334-727-8211
334-727-7221 fax
mwase@tuskegee.edu
immwase@gmail.com

Preventive Health Vice Chair
Richard (Chuck) Rogers
201 Monroe St., Suite 1450
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-5364
RichardRogers@adph.state.al.us

Delegate-APHA
Paula Clark
CHIP/ALL Kids
223 Haynes Street
Talladega, AL 35160
256-315-4897
Paula Clark/08A/ADPH

Alternate Delegate-APHA
Richard Holmes
201 Monroe St.
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-206-3810
rholmes@adph.state.al.us

Delegate-SHA
Susan Bland
201 Monroe Street, Suite 910
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-5950
sbland@adph.state.al.us

Alternate Delegate-SHA
Sandra Langston
201 Monroe St., Suite 1400
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-206-2765
slangston@adph.state.al.us

Delegate - RH
Dale Quinney
P.O. Box 640308
Pike Road AL 36064
334-288-3866
arhaquinney@mindspring.com

Awards
Ruth Harrell
P.O. Box 626
Flomaton, AL 36441
251-296-5101
Rharrell@panhandle.rr.com

Bylaws
Dennis Blair
201 Monroe Street, Suite 700
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-206-5347
dblair@adph.state.al.us

Continuing Education
Cheryl Hall
619 South 19th Street
MEB 305
Birmingham, AL 35233
205-975-9051
205-375-5722 fax
chall@uabmc.edu

Legislative
Judy Smith
Public Health Area II
P.O. Box 1628
Decatur, AL 35602
256-340-2113
256-353-4432 fax
jsmith@adph.state.al.us

Membership
Judy Smith
P.O. Box 1628
Decatur 35602
256-340-2113
256-353-4432 fax
jsmith@adph.state.al.us

Nominations
Jamie Manning
1115 Azalea Place
Brewton, AL 36426
251-809-2881
jmanning@adph.state.al.us

Newsletter
Arrol Sheehan
201 Monroe St., Suite 900
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-5510
334-206-5520 fax
asheehan@adph.state.al.us

Policy and Resolutions
John Heitman
201 Monroe Street, Suite 800
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-206-5264
jheitman@adph.state.al.us

Strategic Planning
Don Pugh
P.O. Box 70190
Tuscaloosa, AL 35407
205-554-4500
dpugh@adph.state.al.us