Mike McCrea, our long-term facilities manager, retired. His official last day was December 31. His tenure in the University System of Maryland started on January 3, 1977, upon being hired by the Center for Vaccine Development (CVD). His relationship with the CVD, however, started earlier when he volunteered to be a human guinea pig in many of the CVD clinical research projects. Through the CVD, he met former Assistant Director Tim Hughes, who brought Mike along as Tim moved to various positions at UMB. When BioMET’s former incarnation, the Medical Biomedical Center, finally got authorization to purchase and renovate a building, Mike began his long association with the building that would become his major responsibility. Mike was instrumental in both the early design phase through construction. Thus, there was nothing that Mike did not know about the building at 725 West Lombard Street.

Mike was instantly recognizable by the ever present white lab coat and tie. With a raft of ID badges dangling from the pocket, Mike could be seen in every corner of the building, making sure things were running smoothly. He was usually the first to arrive in the mornings, generally around 6:30 am. It was a good time to make sure all systems were go. However, Mike was also there through floods (several major ones when the sprinklers went off erroneously), car crashes, and chiller outages. He always said: “My standard analogy for describing my job has long been: ‘Envision that your house is 100,000 square feet. And it has 700 rooms, all of them kitchens and bathrooms. And you have 400 children.’” Because he helped design the building and was here throughout the construction process, Mike was intimately acquainted with every pipe, faucet and outlet.

Mike was also a canoe enthusiast, almost a professional guide. He authored numerous articles and reviews for paddlers. He was the driving force behind the Duckhead Canoe Club and knew everything there was to know about paddling in Maryland. He was a regular visitor to Assateague Island at all times of the year, one of his favorite camping spots.

Working with Mike did have its drawbacks, since he was an inveterate prankster. From spur of the moment pranks to elaborate practical jokes, Mike had a lot of fun with his fellow workers. However, these were never mean, and if someone did not enjoy the game, they were left alone. He had an irreverent, earthy, and lively wit. He was ever helpful with a deep breadth of knowledge of the facility but also of science, his original college major. He has promised to visit once he has shortened his retirement bucket list. In the meantime, BioMET will struggle through moving and construction pains without him. We wish him a grand retirement.
University of Maryland School of Medicine Dean E. Albert Reece, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., appointed Michael S. Donnenberg, M.D., as the new director of the Medical Scientist Training Program and Achsah D. Keegan, Ph.D., as the program’s associate director. The program is usually called the MD-PhD program. Drs. Donnenberg and Keegan replace long-time director Dr. Terry Rogers.

Congratulations to Associate Professor Silvia Muro, the only molecular and cell biologist in the Fischell Department of Bioengineering, on winning the Junior Faculty Outstanding Research Award. Dr. Muro has established herself as an innovator in the field of targeted therapeutic and drug delivery. She is a former BioMET Retreat speaker, and members of her lab regularly attend the Annual Retreat.

Travel Pays Off

Going to scientific meetings is one of the ways research is disseminated. The process starts early in a young scientist’s training. Generally, just after starting their thesis research, a graduate student will present a poster at whichever meeting their faculty advisor regularly attends. To be able to present, an abstract of the project is submitted months in advance. At that time, young scientists can also ask to be considered for various awards based on the research they propose to present. One of these is called a Travel Award. They help defray the expense of getting to the meeting. Only a limited number of these awards are available, and a young scientist may go through their entire graduate school and postdoctoral experience without ever receiving one. That is why it was incredibly exciting when two of Dr. Mervyn Monteiro’s students received travel awards for the annual meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB).

Graduate students, Kathleen Gilpin (left) and Nathaniel Safren (right below), both PhD students from the Program in Neuroscience, won ASCB Travel Awards to attend and present their work at the 2012 annual meeting held from December 15-19, 2012 in San Francisco, CA. While one award is prestigious, to have two awards from the same laboratory is almost unheard of! Kathleen presented her poster entitled “Construction of a Ubiquilin-2 Interaction Network Affected in Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis.” Nathaniel’s poster was entitled “Ubiquilin-1 Overexpression as a Therapy for Huntington’s Disease.” Dr. Monteiro’s laboratory studies neurodegenerative diseases. Besides ALS and Huntington’s Disease, Dr. Monteiro’s work includes research on Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s. The common thread is Dr. Monteiro’s discovery of ubiquilin, a protein involved in protein degradation pathways. It is the disruption of these pathways due to a variety of reasons that cause the abnormal accumulation of proteins in the brain that underlie these and many other neurodegenerative diseases.
Moving Update

Dr. Mervyn Monteiro’s laboratory began packing up the last week of December, though some things started even earlier. The move required coordinating with UMB Environmental Health Services (EHS) to handle hazardous chemicals, radioactive materials and other issues related to moving equipment and supplies that may have contamination issues. Once the equipment was certified by EHS, it moved over and was in place by December 27.

The move did not go as smoothly as was hoped. Some space in the sixth floor of Pharmacy South was still under construction as of December 26, even as Dr. Monteiro’s current laboratory was being packed up. However, the construction crews were busy through the 31st to finish up last minute installations.

Dr. Monteiro was essentially the guinea pig. His experience will be invaluable once the other faculty members begin their moves. Already, lessons were learned. One of the most valuable lessons was to have sorted through everything in the laboratory before the movers got there and to know where things were going so that containers were placed in the right spots in the new laboratories.

Finally Finished

BioMET congratulates our human resources associate, Olivia Sterrett, on completing her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a specialization in Human Resources Management, at the University of Baltimore, Merrick School of Business. It is a slow process working full time and trying to complete a bachelor’s degree. Olivia first went to Baltimore City Community College, receiving an Associate’s Degree in 2009. She then transferred to the University of Baltimore. By going year-round and taking 2-3 classes each semester, Olivia managed to finish up, graduating on December 17.

Olivia will continue to help BioMET’s faculty and staff with all of their human resource needs. Her studies have been a real plus for BioMET. Olivia said she would be taking a few months off of school before going back to earn a certificate in Spanish at Catonsville Community College. Eventually, she would like to relocate someplace warmer, but for now BioMET will continue to enjoy her expertise.

Congratulations again!
**Comings and Goings**

Mike McCrea officially retired on 12/31/12.

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**Publications**


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**Grants and Contracts**

**Awards**

Dr. W. Jonathan Lederer, 12/1/12, NIH-NHLBI, “Stretch-Dependent Calcium Signaling in Heart,” $337,500, yr 3 of 5.

Dr. Shengyun Fang, 12/1/12, NSF, “Regulation of the ER-associated degradation by importin beta,” $225,114, yr 2 of 2.

**Submissions**


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**Talks and Travels**


Dr. Shenyun Fang, symposium speaker, “Study Protein Dislocation from Endoplasmatic Reticulum in Live Cells” FEBS Special Meeting on Protein Quality Control and Ubiquitin System in Health and Diseases, Kusadasi, Turkey, November 15, 2012.

Dr. Shengyun Fang, seminar speaker, “Live cell imaging of protein dislocation from the endoplasmic reticulum,” Turkish Biochemical Society, Izmir, Turkey, November 20, 2012.

Dr. Shengyun Fang, seminar speaker, “Live cell imaging of protein dislocation from the endoplasmic reticulum,” Anhui Medical University School of Basic Medical Sciences, Hefei, Anhui, China, December 5, 2012.

Dr. W. Jonathan Lederer, Seminar speaker, “New signaling pathway in muscle: X-ROS,” Center for Free Radical Biology and the Comprehensive Cancer Center, Division of Environmental Health Sciences, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Dec 6, 2012.


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**MPower Update**

Editor’s Note: While BioMET may not participate in all activities relating to the new initiative, the success of the entire enterprise benefits everyone. Thus, all activities of the new initiative will be highlighted in BioMET Now. As before, all members of the BioMET community are encouraged to look at the MPower web site at mpowermaryland.com for current information.

• UM Ventures, the joint intellectual property commercialization effort, finally has a permanent director. James L. Hughes, formerly chief enterprise and economic development officer and vice president of UMB. Mr. Hughes was named to the position on November 16.

• A joint bioinformatics and bioimaging center has been established between UMB and UMCP. Called the Center for Health-related Informatics and Bioimaging (CHIB), the effort includes computer scientists, biologists, engineers, physicists, biostatisticians and others at UMCP with imaging specialists, physicians, clinicians and additional health experts at UMB.