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SIU Med School Graduates 69 New Physicians

Commencement exercises for the 27th graduating class of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine will be held at noon Saturday, May 19. Sixty-nine physicians and one doctoral student will graduate during the ceremony, which is held in the Sangamon Auditorium at the University of Illinois at Springfield. Two students will be completing a six-year combined program for a M.D./J.D. dual degree.

Donna E. Shalala, Ph.D., new president of the University of Miami and the longest serving U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), is the commencement speaker.

Shalala was appointed HHS Secretary in January 1993. She guided the department in welfare reform, made health insurance available to 3.3 million children, and launched a comprehensive fight against Medicare waste and abuse. She also helped create national initiatives to fight breast cancer and racial and ethnic health disparities, extend HHS's public health and education mission, and bolster the National Institutes of Health budget.

Prior to becoming HHS Secretary, Shalala served as chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the first woman to head a Big Ten university. She also served as president of Hunter College, assistant secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and treasurer of New York City's Municipal Assistance Corporation. A Peace Corps volunteer in Iran, she earned her doctorate from Syracuse University (1970).

Joshua C. Leonard of Mt. Carmel, class chair, will deliver remarks on behalf of the graduating physicians. Dr. Erik Constance, assistant professor of internal medicine and associate dean for student affairs, will present the medical students for degrees while Edward J. Moticka, Ph.D., associate dean for research and faculty affairs, will present the doctoral candidate for her degree. James E. Walker, Ed.D., SIU President, will confer the degrees. Dr. Carl J. Getto, dean and provost of the School of Medicine, will award the diplomas.

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SIU School of Medicine graduation – add 1

The graduates will honor two of their instructors with roles during the ceremony. Dr. Gary Dunnington, professor and chair of surgery, will read the Hippocratic Oath. Dr. Mokenge P. Malafa, associate professor of surgery, will hood the graduates.

Four other faculty members will be recognized for honors. Dr. Robert C. Bussing, associate professor and chief of general internal medicine, will receive the Golden Apple Award for outstanding teaching. Dr. Terence Anthony, Ph.D., associate professor of anatomy emeritus; Robert Browning, Ph.D., professor of physiology, and April Jackson, formerly an instructor of anatomy, will share the Carbondale Teacher of the Year honor for their contributions during the students' first year. The Humanism in Medicine also will be announced and presented to a faculty member and graduating senior during the ceremony.

During the ceremony, Dr. Michael Moran, class of 1983, will receive the medical school's distinguished alumnus award. The award recognizes outstanding contributions to medicine and distinguished service to humankind. His nominators said he is an "excellent clinician who has provided leadership locally and nationally for the advancement of science and medicine" and has a "deep commitment to quality patient care demonstrated by his pioneering work in endoscopic and laparoscopic surgery in the Albany, New York area." His awards include the Clinical Golden Apple Award from Albany Medical College.

Moran received his bachelor's degree from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington (1979) and after graduating from SIU, completed his surgery residency at Yale University in Bridgeport, Conn. (1985) and his urology residency at Albany Medical Center and Union University (1987). He completed a one-year fellowship in stone disease and endourology at the University of Arizona in Tucson (1989).

The new SIU physicians will begin their residency training in their chosen specialty fields in July. Thirty-seven of the graduates (54 percent) will enter primary care specialties. SIU and its affiliated hospitals attracted 12 (17 percent) of the graduates to their residency training programs. Ten (14 percent) picked other Illinois programs and 28 others (41 percent) will stay in the Midwest for their postgraduate training.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: A formal news conference will not be held for Dr. Shalala because of her tight travel schedule. Her address will occur at approximately 1 p.m.

SIU School of Medicine graduation – add 2

Eight Springfield and area residents were among the 69 physicians in the 27th graduating class at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. The graduates received their diplomas during ceremonies on Saturday at Sangamon Auditorium in Springfield.

Dr. Chris B. Ehrlich will begin a pediatrics residency in July with the School of Medicine's affiliated hospitals in Springfield. The son of Jeff and Mary Ehrlich of Jacksonville, Fla., Ehrlich is married to Shelley Ehrlich, formerly of Granite City. He graduated from Southeast High School (1993) and the University of Illinois-Urbana (1997).

Dr. Joseph J. Lachica will begin an emergency medicine residency at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago. He is the son of Drs. Mario and Nieves Lachica of Springfield. Lachica graduated from Sacred Heart-Griffin High School (1993) and the University of Illinois-Urbana (1997).

Dr. Andrew D. Lambert will begin a general surgery residency with the School's affiliated hospitals in Springfield. He is the son of Dave and Maureen Lambert of Sherman. Lambert graduated from Sacred Heart-Griffin High School (1993) and Washington University in St. Louis (1997).

Dr. Jeffrey M. Lehman will begin an internal medicine/pediatrics residency at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Memphis. He is the son of William and Barbara Lehman of Springfield. Lehman graduated from Sacred Heart-Griffin High School (1991) and Illinois State University in Normal (1995, 1998).

Dr. Benjamin E. Montgomery will begin a family practice residency at the School's affiliated hospitals in Springfield. He is the son of David and Charlotte Montgomery of Edinburg and is married to Jill Montgomery. They have a daughter, Emily. Montgomery is a graduate of Edinburg Community High School (1993), Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield (1995) and the University of Illinois-Springfield (1997).

Dr. Patrick W. O'Keefe will enter a preliminary medicine residency with the School's affiliated hospitals in Springfield this July, followed next year by a diagnostic radiology residency at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. He is the son of Dwight and Mary O'Keefe of Springfield. O'Keefe graduated from Springfield High School (1991) and Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va. (1995).

SIU School of Medicine graduation – add 3

Dr. Gregory A. Pate will begin a general surgery residency at Naval Medical Hospital in Portsmouth, Va. He is commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy. Pate is the son of Lewis Pate of Murrayville and Sharon Buggee of Coconut Creek, Fla. He graduated from Jacksonville High School (1984) and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (1997).

Dr. Erika L. Stalets will begin an internal medicine/pediatrics residency at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Memphis. She is the daughter of Richard and Debbie Stalets of Pana. Stalets graduated from Pana High School (1992) and from the University of Illinois-Urbana (1996).

Other graduates and their hometowns are -- Dr. Erika Brudzinski of Park Ridge, Dr. Sun Chaney of Bloomington, Dr. Scott P. Ciechna of Bolingbrook, Dr. Bradley Coots of Morton, Dr. Josephine Dlugopolski of Burbank, Dr. Christina Doherty of Fairview Heights, Dr. Jonathan Ek of Champaign, Dr. Clare T. Fadden of Truro, Cornwall in England, Dr. Lyle Fettig Jr. of Savoy, Dr. Matthew A. Fraley of Jerseyville, Dr. Heidi Gaddey of Tuscola, Dr. James P. Given of Carmi, Dr. Kerri Harting of Godfrey, Dr. John Hartman of Benton, Dr. Michael Hegarty, D.V.M., of Oak Park, Dr. Shireen Heidari of Champaign, Dr. Jeffrey Heise of Joliet, Dr. Scott Herbert of Quincy, Dr. Kelly Higgins of Fairview Heights, Dr. Allan Ho of Downers Grove, Dr. Mary Hoffman of Edwardsville, Dr. Christina Hynes of Hammond, Ind., Dr. Jill Johnston of Edwardsville, Dr. Keira Kamm of Decatur, Dr. Joshua Leonard of Mt. Carmel, Dr. Daniel A. Liesen of Quincy, Dr. Richard Markiewicz of Deerfield, Dr. Todd McCall of Carmi, Dr. Matthew McKay of Moline, Dr. Carl A. Meyer of Mahomet, Dr. Andrea Miller of Harrisburg, Dr. Renee Mueller of O'Fallon, Dr. Martin Muntz of Spring Valley, Dr. Nayna H. Navik of Hillsboro, Dr. Kimberly D. Nordstrom of Naugatuck, Conn., Dr. Robert Post of Roscoe, Dr. Peter M. Rao of Belleville, Dr. Christopher Reynolds of Moline, Dr. Steven D. Rothert of Warsaw, Dr. Amy Schmidt-Rohlfing of Red Bud, Dr. Gregory Schmieder of Belleville, Dr. Todd Smith of Stillman Valley, Dr. J. Ryan Staley of Decatur, Dr. Robert Stall of Elk Grove, Dr. Seth A. Stamberger of La Moile, Dr. Marc Stees of Freeport, Dr. James Stephens of Centralia, Dr. Mark Stivers of Normal, Dr. Richard Tenczar of Palmer, Mass., Dr. Gladys Tse of Belleville, Dr. William Walsh of Naperville, Dr. Derrick R. Ward of Jerseyville, Dr. John Watson of Galesburg, Dr. Jill R. Weber of East Moline, Dr. Jules Whiteman of Peoria, Dr. Zuzanna Wieckowska of Champaign, Dr. Brett W. Wolters of Quincy, Dr. Brent M. Wyatt of Rochelle, Dr. James A. Young II of Bourbonnais, Dr. Jill Young of Rockford, and Dr. Margaret Zabiega of Wroclaw, Poland.