

Under the MicroSCOPE

Look closer at the SIU medical school community and you'll find an abundance of artistic talent



2002

The physician's job is to sustain life, and it is the mission of the medical school to train physicians to do just that. But poetry, prose, artistry — these make life worth living. It is this artistic life that is celebrated in SCOPE, SIU School of Medicine's annual literary magazine, in which poetry, prose, photography and illustrations submitted by the SIU medical community are brought together as a unified statement of artistic talent. So while they might be labeled a doctor, a student, a technician, a teacher or an alumnus, under the cover of SCOPE they're all artists.

Since 1994, SIU medical students have asserted themselves as artists by coordinating SCOPE. In fact, the inspiration for SCOPE came from the medical students, who took the initiative to coordinate the publication with faculty assistance.

"It's a great creative outlet for those of us wrapped up in the sciences," says second-year medical stu-

dent Lisa Nijm, SCOPE's Editor-in-Chief this year. "And for others, it's a way to keep their minds open, express themselves creatively and relieve stress."

As written in the very first volume, SCOPE "is an attempt to capture the myriad experiences and emotions that permeate the beauty and rigors of a medical education. More than a mere journal of literary collections, SCOPE is a collage of humor, tragedy and art that reflects the 'other side' of our medical community."

Eight years later, the magazine is still spearheaded by students and still captures the artistic spirit of the medical community. "This year, we received the highest number of submissions ever," says Nijm.

Though there were too many to publish, the overwhelming interest reaffirms the importance of beauty and artistry in the daily lives of so many.

"SCOPE is meant to capture feelings about medicine, education, life,



1994



1995



1996



1997

S C O P E 2 0 0 2



MAYA CARTER, MSIII
First place, Poetry
"Author Unknown"

Maya has worked with SCOPE behind the scenes since she started medical school. This year was the first year she submitted her poetry. Her poem, "Author Unknown" is written from the point of view of a homeless person. Here's an excerpt:

*"...I ain't stuck
In the quicksand of life.
I ain't sick...
And don't think
This state called
"homelessness"
is some escape
or cloak-and-dagger operation
on board the L-train of life."*

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE THIS POEM?

The poem was a result of a project assigned during the second-year Behavior Medicine segment, where students had the option of visiting the Helping Hands Shelter. There, I saw people coming and going, always planning for a better tomorrow. The people I came in contact with demonstrated a kind of faith that is difficult to come by.

WHAT DO YOU WANT READERS TO LEARN FROM "AUTHOR UNKNOWN"?

I just want people to step back, to re-evaluate themselves before judging others. The people I've spoken to at Helping Hands are trying to better their circumstances, even if having faith and hope are the means to achieving this goal.

and provide a venue for artists' experiences," says Jacqueline Scolari, Ph.D., who, along with Phil Davis, Ph.D., has been a faculty advisor for SCOPE since its inception.

Students, faculty, residents, staff alumni, employees, family members of all ages, and the School of Medicine community at large — all are invited to submit their work to SCOPE. "We want to represent the entire medical community," stresses Dr. Scolari. "For SIU, it shows that we care about our community, and the community's

emotional and spiritual lives, as well as their physical health."

Entries are gathered each fall, and a team of medical students judges them.

Each issue is a peek inside the mind of a medical school community, with subjects ranging from medical anecdotes and deeply personal experiences to stylized verse and a diversity of images.

To this day, the idea of a literary arts magazine for a medical school is still a somewhat unique idea. SIU medical students have received

national acclaim for the publication, including presenting at national meetings and being interviewed on National Public Radio.

Just as the microscope and stethoscope are essential for researchers and physicians to examine life, whether as artist or admirer, SCOPE proves we are alive. ■

To receive copy of SCOPE, contact the SIU Department of Medical Humanities at 217-545-4261 or view it online at www.siumed.edu/pubs.



1998



1999



2000



2001



JEREMY ANDERSON

Clerical Assistant, Medical Records
 First place, Art
 Portrait of Bono (U2 vocalist)
 Done in pencil with no blenders

Jeremy is a regular contributor to SCOPE, who has submitted his art and poetry for the past three years. He has won multiple times, and his drawing was featured on the cover of SCOPE in 2000.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THIS PORTRAIT?

When I choose a subject for a portrait there are a few different determining factors. First and foremost, I have to respect the person. Secondly, I must find the person visually interesting, whether it be overall style or just facial features. In special cases, such as the Bono portrait, a third factor also comes into play — my girlfriend, Dawn, is a diehard U2 fan and really wanted me to do this portrait.

WHAT DO YOU WANT OBSERVERS TO LEARN FROM YOUR PIECE?

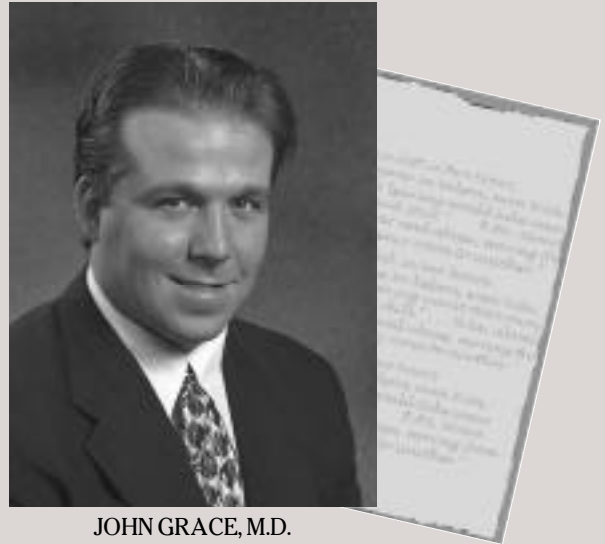
One of my instructors asked why I created such photo-realistic portraits. I said, "Because I can." So if there is anything to be learned from my work, I think it is that people should find their niche and not let others discourage them in their quest for perfection.

WHAT DO WRITING/THE ARTS BRING TO YOUR LIFE?

I have been drawing ever since I could hold a crayon. I feel that art defines me. In school, kids who didn't know anything else about me knew that I was an artist. I've been doing it so long that it is what I am.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

My dad, Dawn, music, other artists like Pushead, David Bolt, Paul Booth, J.K.Potter. That's a tough question. That's like asking what inspires me to breathe or why I like Spam. It just happens.



JOHN GRACE, M.D.

Class of 2000
 First place, Prose,
 "A Wind From the Heart of Rita"

Dr. Grace has been submitting pieces to SCOPE — and winning — since he was an SIU medical student. Now he is a resident in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavior at the University of South Florida, Miami. In his short story, a woman, still tortured years after being abused by her father, finally decides to leave the town that has rejected her. Here's an excerpt:

"The train left in two hours. And everyone in Nelson, even Rita, hoped her leaving would take away the frost and chill."

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THIS SHORT STORY?

When I write stories, I don't write them, I experience them. With "Rita," a chill came over me, I sat down, and I wrote it. It came from a feeling. And as a psychiatry resident, I see the effects of the abuse, so it's an important issue for me.

WHAT DO YOU WANT READERS TO LEARN FROM 'RITA'?

As a physician, I've been amazed by how people can get turned around by a little bit of effort. It was inconvenient for the town to reach out to Rita, but they could have helped her at any time. Rita's life could have been completely different if someone had reached out sooner. When those moments come, it's our obligation to help others.

WHAT DOES WRITING BRING TO YOUR LIFE?

SCOPE was the best thing that ever happened to me as a writer. It's a way for me to see a different side of myself, explore my thoughts and emotions that don't come out during work. I started writing in college, and I just wanted to write one thing that anybody would like. I never accomplished that goal until SCOPE.