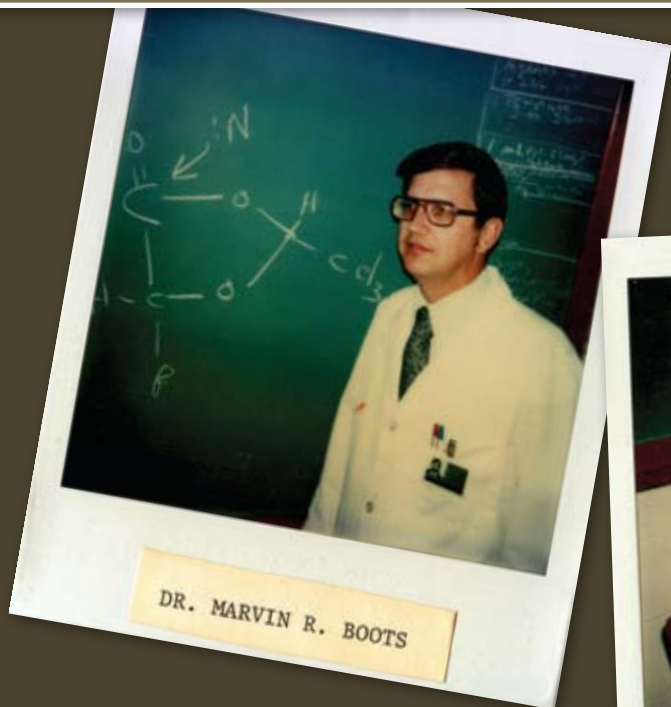


## Looking Forward at Fifty

Graduate studies at the VCU School of Pharmacy have emerged as a core strength. What was born 50 years ago at the Medical College of Virginia through the foresight of Dean Emeritus Warren Weaver has grown into an internationally recognized Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program that brings resources and recognition not only to the School of Pharmacy, but Virginia Commonwealth University as well.

Scientists from across the globe compete for the opportunity to study at the VCU School of Pharmacy because they recognize the value of a VCU School of Pharmacy master's degree or Ph.D. Our graduates go on to become leaders in industry, government, and academia.





# Looking Forward at Fifty



## Victor A. Yanchick

Dean, VCU School of Pharmacy

It's a great time to recognize 50 years of excellence in our Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program. We are the only graduate program in the Commonwealth that offers postgraduate degrees in the pharmaceutical sciences.

Hundreds of students have gone through our program since it first began in 1958. Many have established themselves as leaders in pharmaceutical research, the pharmaceutical industry, government, and academia.

I'm in my thirteenth year as dean, and I have seen the graduate program grow from approximately 35 students in 1996 to over 90 in 2008.

I am very proud, as dean, to carry on this fine tradition at the School of Pharmacy. We look forward to continued success in the future.



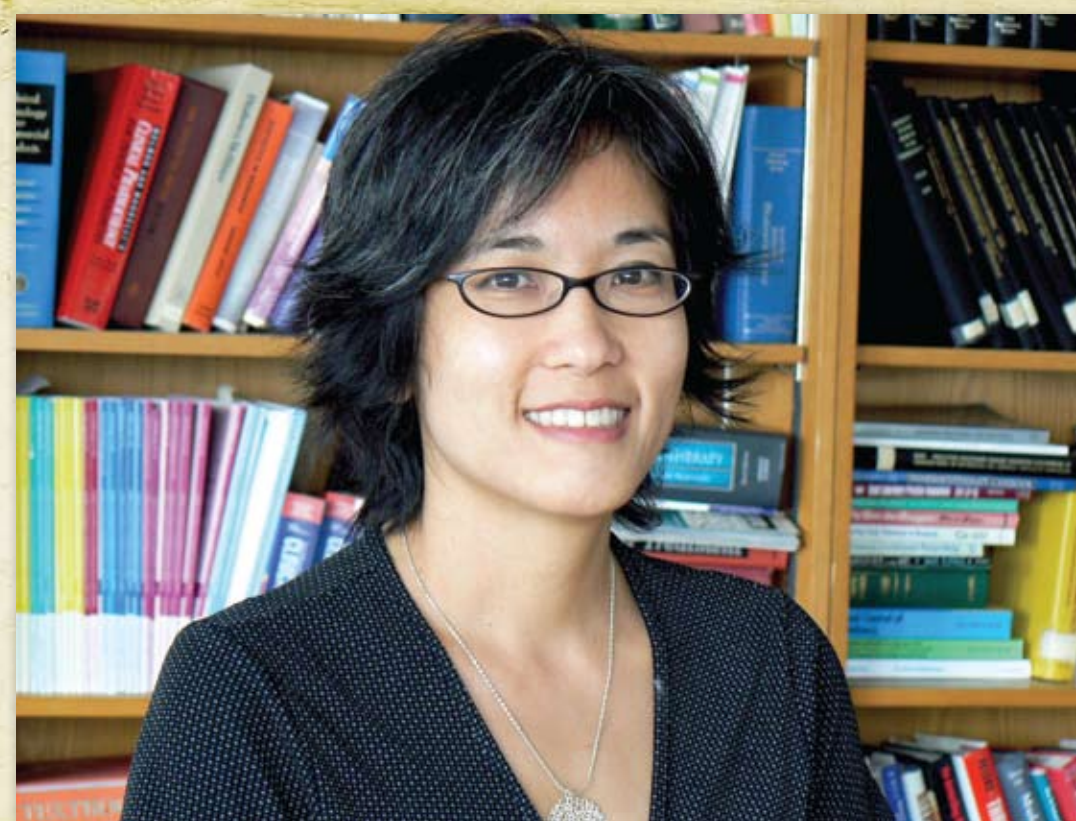
## F. Douglas Boudinot

Dean, VCU Graduate School

The Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program is one of the top programs offered at Virginia Commonwealth University. Its graduates are highly successful in well-respected positions across the country and the world.

The program has grown tremendously, more than doubling its doctoral student enrollment over the past several years. Certainly this growth is critical to the Graduate School, as a goal of the university's strategic plan is to double graduate enrollment.

VCU now has close to 6,000 degree-seeking graduate students.



## Susanna Wu-Pong

Director, Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program

Like many programs approaching their golden years, VCU School of Pharmacy's Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program has a complex past...and a bright future.

Initially focused in medicinal chemistry, the graduate program grew as the research interests and expertise of pharmacy faculty broadened. The program expanded in the 1970s, under the leadership of Bill Barr and John Wood, into pharmaceuticals and pharmacy administration, and more recently to include pharmacogenomics, pharmacoepidemiology, and pharmacotherapy.

In its more recent incarnations, it was administered by the school's three departments—Medicinal Chemistry, Pharmaceuticals, and Pharmacy—as three

programs. Eventually it became one program, on paper, but still was administered as three.

*"The number of applicants has doubled in the last two years."*

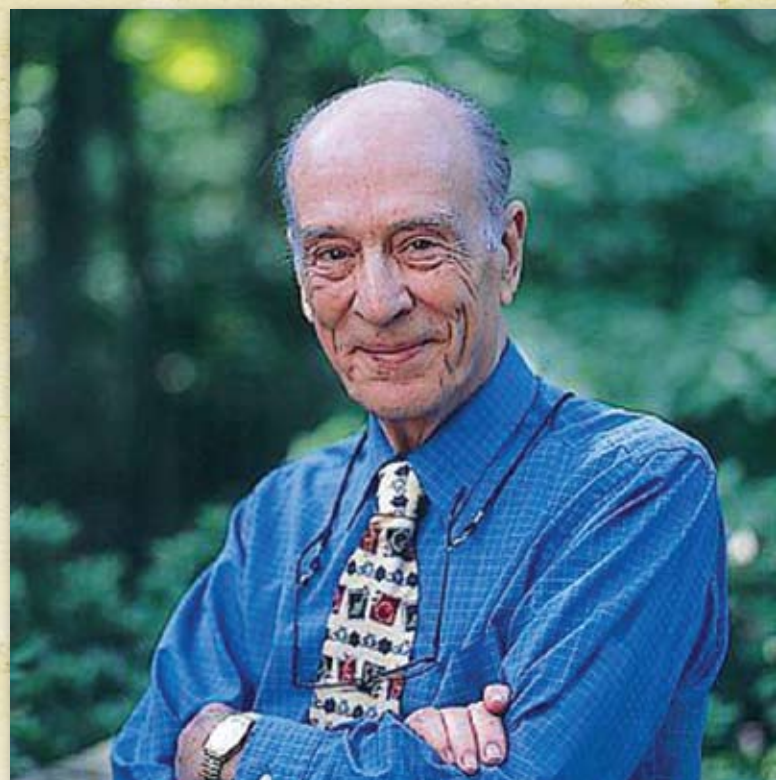
To combine the three programs in reality, Susanna Wu-Pong was hired from the pharmaceuticals faculty in 2004 to direct the newly merged program, which offers four tracks. The current Graduate Affairs Committee comprises Wu-Pong, Jurgen Venitz, H. Thomas Karnes for the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Patricia W. Slattum for Pharmacy Administration and Pharmacotherapy, and Richard B. Westkaemper for the Department of Medicinal Chemistry.

"We govern the graduate program together," says Wu-Pong.

Centralizing the program's administration has helped, she says. Now there are more scholarship students from abroad, more faculty and more Graduate Teaching Assistantships.

M.S., M.P.S., and Ph.D. degrees are available. The Combined Degree Program also offers the Pharm.D./Ph.D., Pharm.D./M.S., Pharm.D./M.B.A., Pharm.D./M.P.H., and Pharm.D./Certificate of Aging Studies.

"The number of applicants has doubled in the last two years," says Wu-Pong. "We're limited only by space and funding, not by interest."



Warren E. Weaver

Dean Emeritus, 1956-81

Warren E. Weaver was chairman of the Department of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry—and C. Jack Ashby's adviser—when MCV School of Pharmacy awarded its first master's degree to Ashby in 1954.

By the time the graduate program was in full swing, Weaver was dean. He awarded the school's first Ph.D. degree to Linwood Payne Jr. (now deceased) in 1958.

Weaver remembers Dominick Coviello, who also received his Ph.D. in 1958, and Robert Beamer, who earned his Ph.D. in 1959. "Bob was a nice boy, the son of a well-known pharmacy father....It was a tough choice" for Beamer to go into academe, Weaver says, because his father had done so well in the business.

Weaver can relate to growing up around the industry: He ran errands in the 1930s for a drugstore in a Baltimore suburb. He was the first in his family to attend college (other than his mother, who attended college for three months before she was married).

"I figured I'd work for the steel mills. And I did work there to make my way through pharmacy school. I'd work 16 hours a day, then sleep for four."

With the encouragement of his father and his 60-cent steel mill wages—"which was a good bit of money at the time"—Weaver managed the tuition at University of Maryland, \$100 a semester.

He arrived at the School of Pharmacy in Richmond in 1950. "I came to MCV from a very good program," Weaver recalls. "A good job with the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory."

He also taught night courses at the University of Maryland's chemistry department until he was invited to join the MCV faculty by then-Dean R. Blackwell Smith Jr.

*"That's how you establish a reputation."*

"We established a master's program," Weaver says, "but did not have a Ph.D. I had a bit of a national reputation in medicinal chemistry, and they hired the best man in the country to chair the department, Walter Hartung, after I was made dean in 1956."

Weaver recalls Hartung as a wonderful man who loved working with people.

"Then we aimed for the Ph.D. degree and established and graduated the first Ph.D.s at MCV. They were good people, and they came out [of school] and got good jobs....People were beginning to hear of us nationally.

"As soon as you get a year or two's worth of graduate students, well-prepared and well-graduated, the word starts to spread....And if you have someone identifiable as a national figure [such as Hartung], people hear about it by word of mouth.

"That's how you establish a reputation."

The graduate program's success led to a cooperative program with Richmond Professional Institute, which subsequently began offering a Ph.D. in chemistry. RPI graduate students, Weaver says, spent much of their time studying at MCV.

In the early 1970s, Weaver says, the hiring of Bill Barr led to the postbaccalaureate Pharm.D. program, which was established in 1976. Barr and John Wood also helped broaden the Ph.D. program to include pharmaceuticals.

The current Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program has more than 50 faculty members in pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemistry, pharmacy administration, and pharmacotherapy.

In 1981, Weaver retired as dean of the School of Pharmacy. But his work wasn't done: He became a founding member of the Christian Pharmacy Fellowship International, which was incorporated in 1984 and whose activities include foreign mission opportunities for pharmacists.



Robert Beamer

B.S. 1955, M.S. 1957, Ph.D. 1959

When Robert Beamer decided on his life's work, Medical College of Virginia offered the state's only School of Pharmacy. Beamer entered the school during exciting times: A graduate program was in the works.

Not only did he earn three degrees himself, but his father, Harold Lee Beamer, had graduated as a Ph.G. (Graduate of Pharmacy) in 1931. "I followed in his footsteps," Beamer says, "but I didn't get into the drugstore business."

He believes his dad might have gone on to medical school. "But I think when I came along in 1933, that took care of that."

So after two years in pre-pharmacy at Davidson College ("My dad wanted me to have a campus life"), young Beamer left his hometown of Pulaski. His memories of Richmond begin with an apartment at 3 E. Franklin St....till he moved next door to 2 E. Franklin St., over Miss Morton's Tea Room.

Despite—or perhaps because of—Miss Morton's legendary rolls, the apartments weren't the cleanest. "We had roaches," Beamer recalls, "and I carried some home, to my mother's consternation."

His final move put him closer to Richmond Professional Institute, somewhere around the 1800 block of West Franklin Street.

Memorable pharmacy faculty included Milton Neuroth; a Mr. Pitts, who was associate dean; and J. Doyle Smith, his organic chemistry professor.

"I did my graduate work for my master's under Dr. Smith....I really started out under Warren Weaver, but he became dean and passed me off to Smith. Then I continued under Walter Hartung and got my doctorate."

Beamer's dad wasn't crazy about the fact that his son was Kappa Psi. "I was the historian in my class, in Mortar and Pestle and also the student APhA. But my dad was PDC [Phi Delta Chi]."

For off-campus entertainment, Beamer and his friends mostly went to the movies, typically Loews Theatre on Broad Street.

Lest current students think Pharmacy Phollies are new and different...Beamer clearly recalls a senior skit at the spring pharmacy banquet. "I, unfortunately, was the one who did ours," he says, chuckling. "It kind of got out of hand."

Some of the seniors enjoyed a few too many beverages and changed a few of the lines in the skit, which was a parody of the 1950s congressional hearings...with a panel of "senators" investigating pharmacy faculty.

"We had some risqué things," Beamer says. "They all did. But Dean [R. Blackwell] Smith didn't like it much. He kind of laid us out for that."

Beamer's fiancée, who was teaching school, said she wouldn't marry him till he got his degree. Eventually she relented, however slightly. "We married June 6, 1959, and I graduated June 7. We spent our honeymoon driving from Pulaski to Richmond!"

Not one to waste time, Beamer hit the road again; on June 9, he began teaching at University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy in Columbia.

In the early 1970s, he was named associate dean, and in 1977, he took a year's sabbatical as a visiting professor in Cornell University's biochemistry department. Back at USC, he became professor and then chairman of medicinal chemistry.

In 1998, Beamer retired as distinguished emeritus professor.

In 2005, he brought his only daughter to visit the old alma mater. "We couldn't find our way around!" he says. "Nothing looked like it did when I was there."

"Biochemistry classes," he says, "were held in the clinic near West Hospital." Across the street from McGuire—where the Ambulatory Care Center now sits—was the Maupin-Maury House, which housed pharmacy-related and student organizations. (Although MCV Alumni Association bought the residence, moved it and now makes its home there, the house is probably best known for its basement, in which Matthew Fontaine Maury conducted the bathtub experiments that led to the development of the underwater torpedo.)

Speaking of basements, physics labs were held in the Tompkins-McCaw Library basement. "It was kind of hot down there in the spring, and it was right after lunch," Beamer says. "People would fall asleep."

McGuire Hall—still recognizable—was home to all his pharmacy classes. "I hope they don't tear it down," he says.



## Bill Fitzsimmons

Pharm.D. 1985

Bill Fitzsimmons hasn't been on campus since he received his two-year postbaccalaureate Pharm.D. degree in 1985. He's stayed busy since he left VCU School of Pharmacy, though: five years at Rush University Medical Center, 18 years at Fujisawa Healthcare, and this past year as senior vice president for research and development at Astellas Pharma Inc.

Being back in his old stomping grounds, Chicago, doesn't mean he's forgotten his graduate alma mater.

How could he? "Those were the only two years of my life outside the greater Chicago area."

Fitzsimmons remembers Richmond with fondness. "It was an interesting mix of still-the-South and a fairly strong East Coast influence."

He shared an apartment with a pharmacy resident in a house on Monument Avenue, just off Stuart Circle. The perfect location, except...he didn't have a car. That meant riding his bike or finding another way to his MCV Campus classes. And August 1983, he recalls, was really hot and humid.

The only real culture shock, Fitzsimmons says, was that students seemed to dress up more than their Midwestern counterparts. Then there was that road trip to Charlottesville for a U.Va. game: Pharmacy faculty wore coats and ties!

William Garnett was Fitzsimmons' adviser. "He's still there, I know. What a great guy. I'm really indebted to him.

"William was really the driver for me."

While enrolled in the School of Pharmacy, Fitzsimmons focused primarily on pharmacokinetics, looking at the "PK" of Dilantin with Garnett.

By the way, he adds, Garnett was notorious for his bad jokes.

While some classes still were held in McGuire Hall, Fitzsimmons was one of the first students to enjoy the advantages of the "new" pharmacy school building across the street, R. Blackwell Smith. "We had a small class, only about eight people," he says. "One of my classmates was Cindy Kirkwood [who now is on the faculty]."

During the interview process, he says, Jim McKenney was probably the most influential. "He developed a really unique model with the Pharmacy Services Clinic." (The Pharmacy Services Clinic, by the way, celebrates its 30th anniversary in November.)

Other faculty Fitzsimmons describes as key to his career include: Doug Hepler ("He wrote on one of my papers that I should stay and work on my Ph.D."); Ron Polk ("I enjoyed my time with infectious diseases"); Bill Barr ("He was a kind of senior statesman, even back then; he was very supportive"); and Tom Reinders ("He was director of the hospital pharmacy. I remember Tom working over my wife to try and keep me in Richmond").

Clearly a man on the move—after all, he got married in Chicago during the two-week break between his first and second years in Richmond—Fitzsimmons says he was "debating doing a fellowship with William Garnett—or taking a real job!" when Paul Pierpaoli recruited him for Rush University.

Pierpaoli had just left his job as director of pharmacy at MCV Hospitals (Reinders filled the position) to take the same job at Rush. The call of his hometown also helped lure Fitzsimmons away.

Fitzsimmons' current position with Astellas—a company formed when Fujisawa merged with Yamanouchi—follows the clinical development of new drugs in the United States. This job differs from his last job mainly, he says, in that "now underneath me there are about 380 or 390 people... something I didn't have before.

"I always say animals and molecules are much easier to deal with than people," he laughs.



## Patty Slattum

B.S. 1985, Pharm.D./Ph.D. 1992

For Patty Slattum, VCU School of Pharmacy memories don't end with the combined graduate degree she earned in 1992: She's now the Department of Pharmacy's vice chairman for graduate studies, an associate professor, and the school's director of geriatric programs.

But some of her best School of Pharmacy memories begin and end with former fellow students and current fellow alumni.

*"You spend so much time together, and our program was small. Our friendships have lasted."*

While enrolled, for example, Slattum remembers "a lot of limeade and onion rings late at night at the Skull and Bones [where the Gateway Building now stands]. We'd see all the hospital residents there."

Now, she says, she might see 15 pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics alumni at any given conference. Most are working in the pharmaceutical industry, she says, so they're constantly on the move.

Still, they manage to keep up with one another.

Many of Slattum's classmates were from India. "It was almost like they had a family here. I remember fixing lunch for everyone....A lot of students lived in apartments on bus routes from the Monroe Park Campus.

"You spend so much time together, and our program was small. Our friendships have lasted."

Several years ago, about 25 or 30 of John Wood's former graduate pharmaceuticals students paid tribute to him at a local park, "all because they loved him," says Slattum.

Her Ph.D. adviser was Bill Barr. "In my era," she adds, "we also have fond memories of Mary Ann Kirkpatrick, who was a lab instructor."

She credits Kirkpatrick for her decision to go into academe rather than the industry. (Slattum's family in Virginia Beach were involved with independent community pharmacies.)

Kirkpatrick, who was taking classes in geriatrics, invited Slattum to join her in a class called *The Biology of Aging*. "A door opened!" Slattum laughs. "I was where I was supposed to be. I had always been in PK...little math girl over here."

Some of the alumni or former faculty she now meets at professional conferences are people whose names she heard while enrolled. "John

Wood kept saying, 'You need to be more like Tom Leonard, you need to be more like Tom Leonard.' I thought he couldn't wait for the day I graduated."

Finally, at a scientific meeting, she met Tom Leonard (Ph.D. '83). Slattum still doesn't know what it was about Tom Leonard that Wood thought she should emulate. But it was good, at least, to know who he was.

Slattum was pleased to see some of her compatriots at the first Graduate Alumni Reunion last year. Many who met at an American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics meeting two years ago had expressed the desire for an opportunity to visit campus.

If they didn't make it this year—the 50th anniversary of the graduate program and the second such reunion—it won't be Slattum's fault. She volunteered to make personal calls when time came to register.

Slattum was looking forward to the two-day event, which combines the 50th graduate program anniversary with the 11th annual Research and Career Day. "But mostly," she says, "I'm just going to have fun meeting up with all my friends!"



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