The Middle Years: Superstars at the Helm

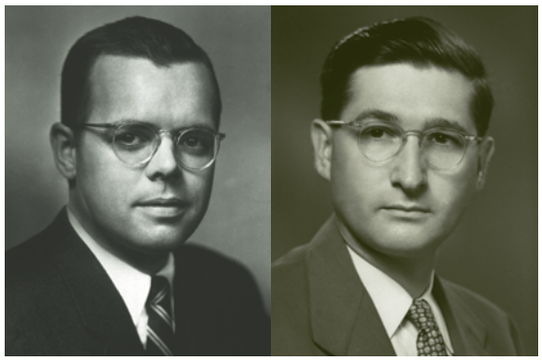
1956 The Medical School Teaching Hospital opened on Marquam Hill to augment the old county hospital.

1958 Thomas Saunders, a clinical professor, served as interim chairman when Thomas Fitzpatrick took a sabbatical and then accepted the chairmanship at Harvard.

1959 Walter Lobitz Jr., hired as the third chairman, leads department for 18 years.

1960 First operating laser is developed by Theodore Maiman.

Thomas Fitzpatrick, Aaron Lerner and Walter Lobitz Jr., 1952 to 1977



The 1950s blew in like a Columbia Gorge wind, carrying Oregon's medical school and its dermatology department downstream into bigger waters. Departments built and led by volunteer physicians like Kingery gave way to full-time academics in the early 1950s. The Medical School Teaching Hospital opened on Marquam Hill in 1956 to augment the old county hospital, and most downtown clinics relocated to the hilltop campus.

New training programs and research labs sprung up around the country. Specialty groups proliferated and recorded impressive growth between their start-up and the 1970s. For example, the American Academy of Dermatology and Syphilology grew from 300 dermatologists in its founding year of 1938 to 3,150 members in 1970. The American Board of Dermatology and Syphilology began in 1932 and certified 644 diplomates in its first decade; in the 1970s, it certified 2,348 diplomates.

The prevalence of syphilis as a major health problem and the surge of penicillin use eventually took syphilis out of the hands of dermatologists and into the arms of infectious disease and public health specialists. Consequently, the American Board of Dermatology dropped syphilology from its name in 1955, and the AAD followed suit in 1961.

In 1974, the Oregon State System of Higher Education separated the medical school from the University of Oregon, uniting it with the nursing and dental schools on Marquam Hill. The new entity, called the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, was given its own president and degree-granting authority, and the university's transformation into a major health and science center had begun.

Next in line were the superstars, and if dermatology had a Hall of Fame the three who led the department from 1952 to 1977 would be in it. They are Thomas Fitzpatrick, M.D., Ph.D., the division's first full-time head; his lifelong friend and colleague, Aaron Lerner, M.D., Ph.D.; and Walter Lobitz Jr., M.D., head of the division for almost two decades. The AAD would award all three its "Master Dermatologist Award" – Lobitz in 1988, Fitzpatrick in 1990 and Lerner in 1998 – for contributions to the specialty at the national and international levels.

The Fitz and Lerner years: 1952 to 1958

Fitzpatrick and Lerner arrived in Oregon in 1952, casting a bright light on the state, albeit briefly.

1960s

Dermatology residency builds to nine residents, with 100 applicants for every three spaces.

UOMS research money is $3.6 million; by 1980, the number rises to $10.6 million (according to Facts brochures published by the school).

1963

In-depth study of PABA by Madhukar Pathak, Thomas Fitzpatrick and Edgar Frenk initiates marketing of sunscreens.

Lerner left in 1955 for Yale where he served as the first chief of dermatology from 1958 to 1985, and Fitzpatrick became Harvard's chairman from 1959 to 1987. Both reached the pinnacle of their profession and specialty, and their time at Oregon helped set the stage for their stellar careers.

"They were the pair that put dermatology research on the map," says Ethan Lerner, M.D., Ph.D., son of Aaron, and a dermatologist and researcher at Harvard Medical School. "They pushed the scientific agenda."

Fitzpatrick and Lerner were linked throughout their lives by job history, research interests, a love of teaching and caring for patients, an enduring friendship and close ties with international researchers.

Fitzpatrick and Lerner met in 1947 at the Army Chemical Center in Edgewood Arsenal, Md. They became close friends and later took academic positions at the University of Michigan. Lerner directed a research laboratory; his wife Marguerite "Marge" Lerner, M.D., was a medical intern and later dermatology resident there. Fitzpatrick joined Lerner at Ann Arbor in 1949 so that the two could pursue their mutual interest in pigmentation.

By the early 1950s, "(Fitzpatrick) felt that the two of us could run a department on our own," Lerner wrote. "The University of Oregon would give us both tenured positions with Fitzpatrick being a full professor and me an associate professor. We accepted the Oregon offer. Fitzpatrick was 32 years old. I was 31." (Lerner, 2004, www.nature.com/jid/journal/v122/n2/full/5602149a.)

Marge Lerner accompanied her husband to Oregon and completed the final year of her dermatology residency at UOMS in 1954, staying on another year as an instructor. She was the department's first female resident and faculty member.

During their Oregon tenure, Lerner and Fitzpatrick produced signature research on pigmentation. They proved that melanocyte stimulating hormone (MSH), which they isolated from frogs, could darken human skin. This hormone stimulates the release of melanin (the pigment found in skin, eyes and hair) from

Basic Research in the Fitz and Lerner Era: 1952 to 1958

1952 to 1958, Thomas Fitzpatrick, M.D., Ph.D.
Background in chemistry, focused on the field of cutaneous pigmentation

1952 to 1955, Aaron Lerner, M.D., Ph.D.
Focus included the biochemistry of melanin and pigmentation, mechanism of endocrine control of pigmentation, malignant melanoma and cryoglobulins

1955 to 1963, Farrington Daniels Jr., M.D.
Background in physiology; studied the effects of heat, cold and ultraviolet radiation on the skin

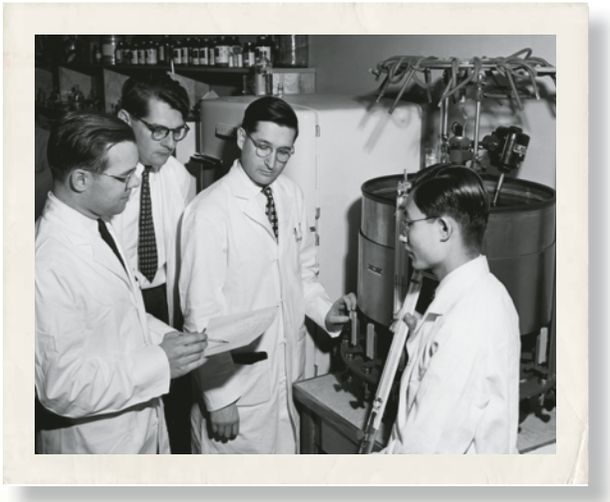
1965

The "Brown Symposium" on the Biology of Skin moves to Oregon with its creator, William Montagna, and becomes the "Green Symposium." It was eventually re-named, The Montagna Symposium on the Biology of Skin.

1967

UOMS opens the Basic Sciences Building.

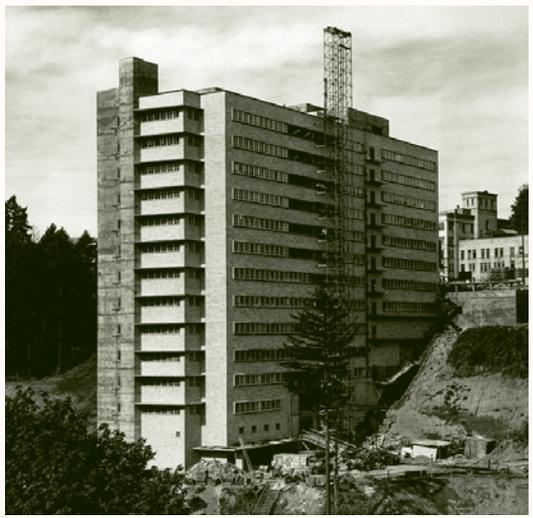
melanocytes (cells). These studies set the stage for Lerner's isolation of MSH in 1956 at Yale.



In 1957, Lerner and colleagues discovered melatonin. The isolation of this hormone set off a cascade of research that circled back to Oregon decades later. Starting in the 1980s and continuing through today, groups of OHSU psychiatrists and neuroscientists have elucidated melatonin's role in biologic rhythms, including human wake and sleep cycles.

Lerner and Fitzpatrick also worked on psoralens and topical steroids while in Oregon. Psoralen, a natural compound found in plants, increases skin sensitivity to light when applied topically or taken orally. The two scientists exposed patients to psoralen drugs and then ultraviolet light therapy. Although not without risk, phototherapy has proved effective in treating psoriasis, vitiligo, dermatitis and other severe skin disorders and is still prescribed by skin specialists worldwide. Fitzpatrick formalized treatment of psoriasis using psoralen compounds combined with ultraviolet "A," called PUVA, in a major paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1974.

Rooted in the Fitzpatrick/Lerner era is a story about the esteemed dermatologist, Harvey Blank, M.D., who collaborated with the two in about 1953 on developing potent topical corticosteroids. "Harvey was a chemist at the Upjohn drug company and had access to fluorinated compounds, which he provided dad and Fitz," recalls Ethan Lerner. "They'd apply the compounds to eczema and it would go away. This was around the same time that injecting cortisone into arthritic areas would enable patients to walk again. Eventually, though, Upjohn shut the program down. My dad and Fitz begged Harvey to provide them with these compounds. By hook or by crook, Harvey



Upper left: Part of the melanin research team, circa 1953, (from left): Thomas Fitzpatrick, Howard Mason, Aaron Lerner and Atushi Kukita, a dermatologist from the University of Toyko

Upper right: Construction of the Medical School Hospital, circa 1956

Opposite: Walter Lobitz Jr. as pictured in the Masters in Dermatology article published in 1998

1968

Frances Storrs completes her residency and joins the faculty as the only female member for 21 years.

1968

The National Psoriasis Foundation is founded in Portland with support from Kenneth Halprin and others in the department.

came through for them and as a result of that interaction, these cortisones – still among the most powerful available – made it into dermatology."

Fitzpatrick became a household name in dermatology, according to the *Historical Atlas of Dermatology and Dermatologists* (Crissey, Parish and Holubar 2002, page 155). "His name is familiar everywhere as the originator of '*Fitzpatrick's Dermatology in General Medicine*,' the most successful textbook on skin diseases of our time," the atlas' authors state.

Lerner was the first dermatologist elected to the prestigious National Academy of Sciences and was always interested in skin color and people's perceptions of skin color. He thought that the 21st century would bring cures for vitiligo, melanoma and many other pigmentary disorders, and had the fascinating belief that people may someday be able to change the color of their skin at will. He died one year before the country elected its first black president.

The Lobitz era: 1959 to 1977

Kingery, Fitzpatrick, Lerner and colleagues tilled the soil and planted vines; their successor, Walter Lobitz Jr., M.D., grew the vineyards into a department worthy of a fine Oregon Pinot Noir.

In 1958, Fitzpatrick took a sabbatical in Oxford, England, and instead of returning to Oregon, he accepted the chairmanship at Harvard. During his absence, Thomas Saunders, M.D., a clinical professor, served as interim chairman.

When Lobitz took over in 1959, the staff consisted of two dermatologists. Within five years, it had grown into six full-time faculty, 12 residents and several research fellows. The clinical faculty included 10 community physicians and another nine clinical instructors. He was at the helm in 1970 when the Division of Dermatology became a department, and the residency program had a waiting list of 100 applicants for its three or four positions. In the 18 years of Lobitz's chairmanship, the Department of Dermatology acquired a faculty and supporting staff of more than 30. Near the time of his retirement in 1977, the specialty had grown to more than 4,000 strong in the U.S., and Lobitz had become a legend not only in Oregon but also throughout the specialty of dermatology.

"He was one of the people who shaped dermatology and contributed to dermatology's progression from a descriptive, visual type of specialty to a scientifically based specialty," recalls Diane Baker, M.D., a clinical professor of dermatology and a former president of the American Academy of Dermatology who came to Oregon to complete her residency in 1974 in order to work with Lobitz.

When Lobitz died in 2006 at the age of 93, his colleagues lamented the loss "of a true giant of dermatology. [He] was a master at coordinating, harmonizing, energizing and stimulating those he taught, worked with and loved. His spirit lives on in the Oregon dermatology program he nurtured and in the many lives he touched" (Baker 2006, pages 1495-1496).

1969

Albert Kligman, E.F. Fulton Jr. and Gerd Plewig describe value of topically applied vitamin A acid in the treatment of acne vulgaris – the gold standard for topical acne therapy.

1970

Division of Dermatology within the Department of Medicine becomes a department in its own right.

1973

UOMS buys the county hospital for $1 and combines it with the Medical School Hospital to create University Hospital.

1974

UOMS merges with the dental and nursing schools to form the independent University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, giving it the right to grant its own degrees.

The left photo of Walter Lobitz Jr., was taken in the early 1940s following medical school to show the damaging effects of generalized morphea, the rare skin disorder he was diagnosed with at age 21. At Frances Storrs' urging, Lobitz re-enacted the pose in the late 1970s. The pictures have adorned Storrs' office since that time.

Lobitz before Oregon

(Much of the following section, including all quotes attributed to Lobitz, was published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, *Vol. 5, 1988, "Masters in Dermatology, Walter C. Lobitz, Jr, MD." Excerpts appear with permission from Elsevier, publisher for the JAAD.)*

A rare skin disorder and two physician mentors profoundly influenced Lobitz, who was born and educated in Cincinnati. In his first year of medical school in 1932 at the University of Cincinnati, Lobitz, just 21, was diagnosed with generalized morphea, a disease in which hard and dark skin patches can spread across the body. Years later, he would roll up his sleeves and take down his pants to show medical students the scars left by his encounter with the disease.

The blow to his health was softened by the influence of his physician, Leon Goldman, M.D., a

dermatologist at Cincinnati General Hospital who took a strong liking to his bright young patient. At Goldman's urging, Lobitz set his medical studies aside for three years and delved into literature, theater, music and art. These became lifelong passions; Lobitz eventually became known as a musician and composer, a watercolor artist as well as a gourmet cook and connoisseur of fine wines.

Goldman influenced Lobitz's whole attitude toward learning, counseling him, "You can't not know in medicine." When Lobitz returned to medical school after the long absence, he said he encountered "some of the most difficult months I can remember – not having been a good student to begin with." Despite the slow start, he completed his baccalaureate in 1939 and his medical degree with honors in 1941. He joined the Mayo Clinic and Foundation in Rochester, Minn., in 1942 as a dermatology fellow.

The second mentor was Paul O'Leary, M.D., chief of dermatology at Mayo, who encouraged Lobitz to consider investigative and academic dermatology. O'Leary rewarded his residents "with two pats on the back for every kick in the pants – a pretty good ratio," Lobitz said. In medical school Lobitz had been fascinated by sweat glands and while at the Mayo Clinic had developed an interest in atopic dermatitis (a type of eczema, which chronically relapses and causes itching). "I fell in love with the disease," he said. "I liked dealing with these people, and I liked helping them."

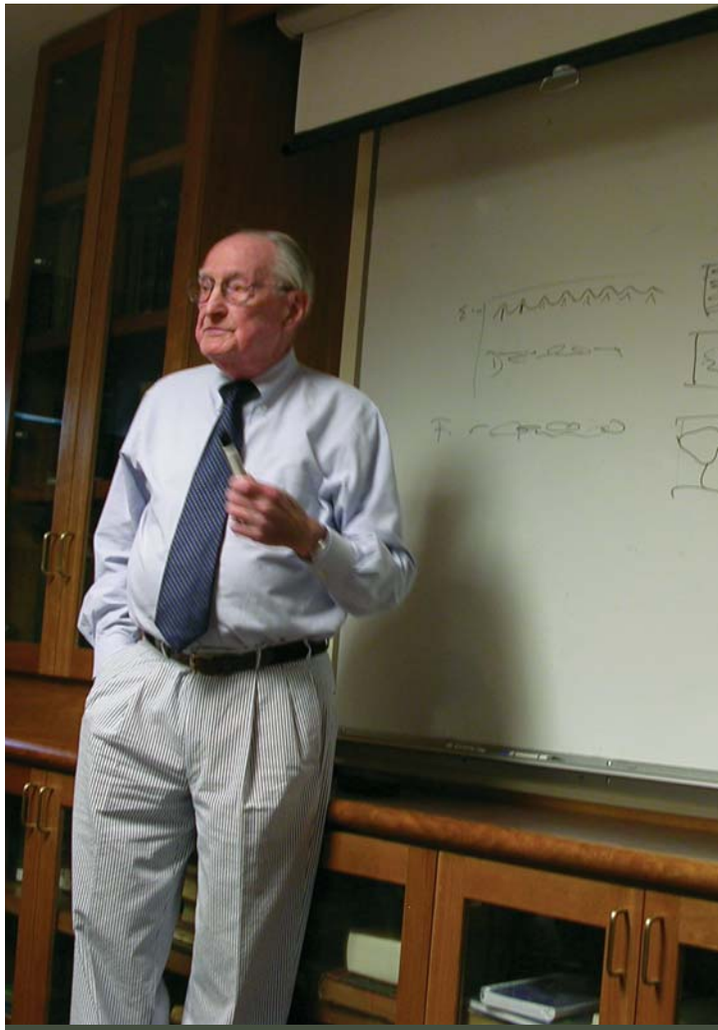
After his fellowship, Lobitz moved to Hanover, N.H., to start his own dermatology program at the Hitchcock Clinic and Dartmouth Medical School. On arrival in 1947, he was the only full-time dermatologist between Boston and Montreal. Life in the north country college town suited Lobitz perfectly.

In 1948, he published a groundbreaking study on the chemistry of palmar sweat. "I was able to get into the mouth of the sweat pore and collect pure sweat, then analyze it with spectrophotometry and get good readings," he said. His studies of the eccrine sweat gland led to an interest in miliaria, describing its distinctive signs and symptoms that would alert physicians to its presence.

In 1954, Lobitz along with John Holyoke, M.D., and William Montagna, Ph.D., described another first: the responses of the human eccrine sweat duct to controlled injury. He often collaborated with Montagna, the biologist and cellular anatomist who came to Oregon in 1963 at Lobitz's urging and brought needed strength in basic science to dermatology. Montagna was the second director of the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center and the man who turned it into a preeminent primate research center.

Lobitz's work with Montagna heralded a new era of scientific inquiry in skin diseases: true investigative dermatology. Montagna and Lobitz had organized the Brown Conference at Providence, R.I., in 1950, which brought together basic scientists and clinical dermatologists for in-depth discussions on skin biology. The conference became the "Green Conference" when it moved to Oregon in the early 1960s and endures today as the Montagna Symposium on the Biology of Skin. "It's the only conference [in dermatology] that allows those of us seeing patients to interact with doctoral scientists doing the research, which may make a huge difference to our patients," Baker says.

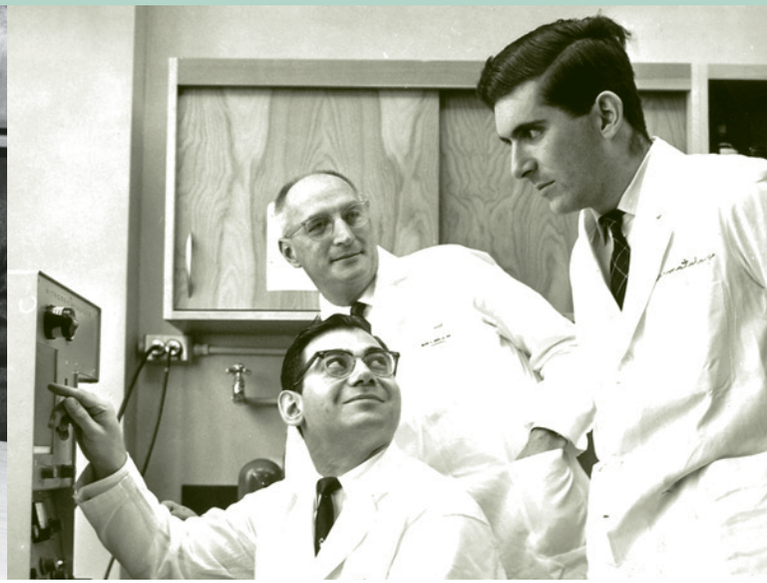
As Lobitz's reputation grew, he began receiving offers from around the country. "The people from Oregon were persistent," he said in the "Masters" article, and in 1959, he accepted an offer to lead the division of dermatology at UOMS.



Above: Still interested in teaching residents at age 92, Walter Lobitz Jr., is captured giving a lecture to the residents in the Kingery Library (fourth floor, Outpatient Clinic) in 2004.

Center: Frances Storrs and Paul Russell pose for pictures for the American Academy of Dermatology in 1968. Storrs was the chairperson of its long-range planning committee and Russell was the current secretary-treasurer and was running for the president's position at that time.

Right: Richard Dobson (seated), Walter Lobitz Jr., (back) and an unidentified collaborator, circa late 1960s



Lobitz invigorates, raises department to national prominence

A large university seemed a good place to test his ideas in education and research. A stint on the American Board of Dermatology directing oral examinations exposed Lobitz to weaknesses in dermatology education. He saw Oregon as a perfect opportunity to develop new ideas and influence education.

At UOMS, "We had this tremendous amount of time to spend teaching in all four years of medical school," he recalled in the "Masters" article. "We altered curriculum and brought students out of the lecture room, into the clinic." His aim was to sell dermatology to medical students. "We wanted them to know there was this tremendous structure (skin) that they were looking at – the greatest opportunity they'd ever had in their lives to actually see pathology. They didn't have to pull

the organ out at an autopsy or on a surgical table to see disease; they were *looking* at the disease. They were all excited about our courses all the time, I think because we were."

And rather than having residents teach the medical students, he made sure the faculty taught students. "We had to examine ourselves as much as we examined them, to see what they were learning."

With research, he envisioned dermatology moving out of the static, morphologic (visual appearance) era that dominated its past and into a new age based on the underlying cellular and physiologic dynamics of skin disease. In championing this metamorphosis, he carved out a career that exceeded his expectations. "I really didn't want to be what I am today," he stated at his retirement in 1977. "I just didn't want to lose; things just kept happening."

Early on, he recruited Richard Dobson, M.D., one of his first residents at Dartmouth, to Oregon. They continued their investigations into sweat gland biology and cutaneous carcinogenesis. Later, Lobitz's landmark discoveries on cellular immunity in atopic dermatitis inspired current investigators, such as Jon Hanifin, M.D., now an internationally recognized leader in atopic dermatitis and a professor emeritus in the department.

He became a formidable force in promoting dermatology research throughout the country. His membership on the National Institutes of Health General Medicine Study Group, Dermatology Training Grants, and the Commission on Cutaneous Disease of the Armed Forces Epidemiology Board allowed him to advocate for dermatology research. The specialty's reputation soared as a result of the assignment of dermatologic problems to centers capable of solving them.

As his career progressed, Lobitz spent less time in the lab and more in teaching. He called his goal to divide his career equally between research and clinical medicine "foolish. Good research is a full-time job," he said in the "Masters" article.

Rather, he enabled younger investigators to flourish. To him, this meant getting money for their research. "I knew what we could do, and then I had to find out who needed it done, and see if they would pay for it," he said. He sold ideas to corporations and the military, and he secured government projects and training grants to support research. "I didn't know that becoming a full-time head of a medical school department [meant raising money outside the local area], but once you're there, you've got to do it."

Frances Storrs, M.D., the first female resident since Marge Lerner and later a colleague of Lobitz's says, "He was probably the best example of a pure mentor that I've ever encountered in any part of my life, medical or personal. He was absolutely charismatic. The community wanted to be where he was because his mind sparkled with ideas and interesting concepts."

Lobitz used his charisma to diffuse the normal town-gown divide. "Wally had a knack for getting the local and regional clinical faculty to participate in the teaching program and even hired some of them to work part time in the department teaching residents or doing research," says Robert Bell, M.D., a resident graduate from the 60s.

These included Leon Ray, M.D., who taught mycology and ran a lab, and Saunders, who taught dermatopathology before Clifton White Jr., M.D., became the department's first full-time dermatopathologist. He also attracted Frank Crowe, M.D., from Boise, Idaho, and John Shaw, M.D., from Tacoma, Wash. And for years, Sheldon Walker, M.D., then Bruce Miller, M.D., and finally Paul Russell, M.D., a resident graduate, ran the Wednesday morning morphology conferences (which continue today). Cliffton Massar, M.D., also a graduate, taught a course in superficial X-ray therapy and Grenz ray therapy.

Lobitz was a founding member of the Association of University Professors of Dermatology and its president in 1965. Among other things, this group helped navigate dermatology into a specialty in its own right, rather than letting it remain a subspecialty of internal medicine. Firm in his conviction that "education is teaching educators how to teach," Lobitz organized seminars on how to teach, how people learn and how to challenge people.

Ted Kingery remembers Lobitz as a master at preparing people to speak at national meetings. Kingery, who held many leadership positions in national organizations, including president of the AAD, described his experience of going before a group of peers in the department and practicing a speech. "Anyone who could find anything wrong with your talk could blow the whistle," Kingery recalls. "It was a terrible experience, but at the end of these sessions your talk would be near perfect."

During his career, Lobitz influenced all the major organizations in dermatology. His mentor O'Leary from Mayo helped create the American Academy of Dermatology in 1938 and in 1947 Lobitz became a fellow in the academy; he was its president in 1969. He also served as president of the American Board of Dermatology in 1963, the American Dermatological Association in

Right: (left to right) Residents Robert (Dick) Taylor, Paul Russell, Alan Lachman, Robert Turner and Frances Storrs display a good salmon catch after a day at the Oregon coast aboard clinical faculty member William (Charles) Watkins' boat, circa mid-1960's.

Opposite page: Walter Lobitz Jr. reviews pathology slides. The department has retained the historical lantern slides, many of which Lobitz brought with him from Dartmouth Medical School.

Bottom: Former residents Karen Vigeland (left) and Elizabeth Dawson (right) are both connected to William Watkins mentioned above. Vigeland took over Watkins' Vancouver practice following his retirement and Dawson took over Vigeland's practice following her retirement.

1972, the Society for Investigative Dermatology in 1957, the Oregon Dermatology Society in 1969, and the Pacific Northwest Dermatological Society in 1971. He was on the Board of Trustees of the Dermatology Foundation and was active in the AMA Section on Dermatology when it was the only national forum where new and original clinical reports in dermatology could reach a wide audience. He was chief editor of the *Archives of Dermatology* from 1963 to 1969.

"He accepted everyone as an equal and almost immediately instilled a desire to give back to the specialty," Baker recalls. "He truly believed that as physicians, it was an honor to have the opportunity to care for people and that the privilege should always be respected. He emanated a joy in taking care of people and learning about illnesses and truly caring for patients."

According to all who knew him, Lobitz's enduring legacy may be in those he taught and nurtured. "He was a skilled mentor of young dermatologists and was very proud of his 'dermatology children,'" Baker wrote (Baker 2006, pages 1495-1496). "He personally made sure that doors were opened and the way made smooth. He was directly responsible for training a remarkable number of dermatologists who went on to become national and international leaders."

Lobitz once said that there are many interesting stories in the dermatologic family. "We're a small enough society so that we are family. We know each other, and we take care of each other and suffer with each other and love each other." After nearly four decades of influence on Oregon dermatology, Walter Lobitz Jr., was a much beloved teacher, mentor, scientist and friend.

Basic Research in the Lobitz era: 1959 to 1977

1959 to 1977, Walter Lobitz Jr., M.D.

1961 to 1972, Richard Dobson, M.D.
Completed residency in 1957 with Lobitz at Dartmouth and in 1961 accepted the head of research position in Oregon. Dobson had also previously worked with Montagna, and Suskind, during his earlier schooling. In his nine-year stay, he conducted research at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center with Montagna, various fellows and doctoral student Jeff Pinto. His research focused on inducing skin cancer in rhesus monkeys, which eventually succeeded years later. Dobson went on to establish the dermatology departments at the State University of New York, Buffalo, and the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston.

1961 to 1965, Nicholas Nicoladies, Ph.D.

1963 to 1968, Raymond Suskind, M.D.
Professor and head, Division of Environmental Medicine, UOMS, expertise in contact and environmental dermatology and mentor of Storrs.

1962 to 1968, Robert Kellum, M.D.
Known for his studies in lupus erythematosus and surface lipids in acne vulgaris.

1964 to 1968, Kenneth Halprin, M.D.
Instrumental in early studies on psoriasis pathogenesis. Helped establish the National Psoriasis Foundation in 1968, and an early mentor to Storrs. In 1990, Storrs wrote him:

"Ken, I do like to tell you, every now and then, what an important role you played in my professional development. Your tremendous interest in the mechanisms of disease, coupled with your extraordinary intellect and absolute accessibility, made you a student's dream teacher. I try very much, in my relationship with my residents, to behave as much as I can, as you did with me."

1965 to 1986, Hunan Fu, M.D., Ph.D.
Came to Oregon to work with Montagna, Ph.D., at the primate center. A Chinese-born dermatologist and dermatopathologist, her expertise was pigment and melanocytes. She collaborated with other faculty, including Hanifin, M.D., publishing a paper on albinism, and provided dermatopathology education to the residents.

1967 to 1970, Gordon Caron, M.D.

1968 to 1969, Shoji Toshitani, M.D.

1970 - 1982, William Montagna, Ph.D.
See page 29 for more information

1971 to current, Jon Hanifin, M.D.
Joined Lobitz in 1971 as a result of their mutual interest in the immunology of dermatophyte infections. Their studies revealed a high rate of immediate trichophytin reactivity among patients, including the discovery that atopy might be a predisposing factor. This led Hanifin to begin studies on the immunologic basis for atopic dermatitis at a time when "blockade" of lymphocyte beta-adrenergic receptors was a prominent theory in understanding asthma. With a focus on phosphodiesterase isoforms, Hanifin's research has stimulated a continuing series of therapeutic studies using ever-more potent inhibitors of this enzyme in patients with atopic deseases. Hanifin was also the main scientific mentor for Kevin Cooper, M.D., while he completed his residency at OHSU.

1972 to 1991, Kirk Wuepper, M.D.
Came from Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla, Calif. after training at the University of Michigan. He was a prolific researcher with an interest in protein characterization to the skin and in microbial toxins. In 1975 he and then-resident Melodie Buxman, M.D., described the role of epidermal transglutaminase in keratin cross-linking. Many other residents, including Baker, Thomas Ray, M.D., and Robert Dimond, M.D., worked with him on the immune mechanisms of skin injury. His friend and colleague, Hanifin, wrote at the time of Wuepper's death in 1994, "Kirk Wuepper's insights to the dermatologic sciences and his always clear and questioning mind set a worthy example for all who worked with him. His short span of years burgeons with scientific accomplishment."

From Rare to Common, Women Gain Numbers and Respect in Dermatology

One of Oregon's earliest female physicians and suffragette pioneers reportedly said she wished that she had been born a boy. It was probably because the door to her chosen profession – medicine – wasn't open to women. "I realized very early in life that a girl was hampered and hemmed in on all sides simply by the accident of sex," Bethenia Owens-Adair, M.D., (1840 to 1926) wrote in her autobiography. (www.oregonencyclopedia.org/entry/view/bethenia_owens_adair_1840_1926/)

A century later, in 1977, another prominent female physician experienced discrimination 20th-century style. OHSU dermatology then-assistant professor Storrs, was asked to leave a gathering of prominent physicians at Portland's exclusive and then all-male Arlington Club because of her gender. "It was a true epiphany," she says. "I couldn't be prominent because I didn't have the right anatomy. I had a great sense of the irrationality of segregation, of discrimination."

Fortunately for women born more recently, Owens-Adair, Storrs and others, including male proponents of women's rights, cleared the way for aspiring female physicians. The short burst of fame Storrs received in the local media after the Arlington snub became public was nothing compared to the fire the incident ignited within her. From that point, she worked to ensure that other women didn't suffer the same insult.

In dermatology, female residents have out-numbered male residents in the United States since 1994, including at OHSU. Women now represent 20 percent of America's 16,000 practicing dermatologists.

Unlike Owens-Adair, Storrs had female role models, including her own mother who, along with her father, graduated from Oregon's medical school and practiced family medicine in Spokane, Wash. After graduation from Cornell Medical College in New York City in 1964, Storrs moved to Portland for an internship at Good Samaritan Hospital. An early mentor, Ted Kingery, arranged for her to meet Lobitz, then chairman, who offered her a residency position

Right: Frances Storrs' gender was an exception in the mid 1960s, as evidenced by this gathering of the residents at a local Chinese restaurant. According to Storrs, Thomas Saunders (on left looking at camera) treated the residents to dinner at this restaurant frequently.

Opposite page: Forty years later in 2006, the gender mix shows the female trend that has developed; of the 12 residents, seven are female.

in 1965. He became her lifelong friend, mentor and supporter.

Although Storrs was the second female resident, she was the first female resident to complete all of her training in the department. Medical school catalogs reveal that Marge Lerner, who came to Oregon with her husband, Aaron Lerner, completed her final year of residency in 1953. She was a clinical instructor in 1954. Like Storrs, she suffered gender discrimination: the Oregon Dermatology Society denied her membership in the 1950s because she was a woman, according to Kingery.

Also in 1965, a female scientist who primarily worked with Montagna, at the Oregon Regional (now National) Primate Research Center received a dermatology appointment. Funan Hu, M.D., Ph.D., was a Chinese-trained dermatopathologist who had worked previously with dermatology "lion" Clarence Livingood, M.D., at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. Although Hu didn't practice clinically in Oregon, she taught residents about dermatopathology and collaborated on research projects (including a 1980 paper on "yellow mutant albinism" with Hanifin), in addition to her pigment and melanocytes work with Montagna.

After Storrs completed her residency in 1968, "Fran," as she is affectionately known, joined the faculty as an instructor. Her acceptance into the program was a monumental shift in thinking for the dominant male faculty.

Dobson, a prominent dermatologist who was hired by Lobitz to lead the department's research efforts in 1961 and who stayed through 1972, says the faculty had a serious debate about whether to allow a woman to join their ranks. Until then, he says, dermatology was "basically a men's club."

"We debated a long time," Dobson recalls. "Wally had misgivings, and I had concerns, and finally we decided that Fran would be OK."

Under the tutelage of Suskind, a faculty member from 1963 to1968, Storrs took responsibility for the Contact Dermititis Clinic, which would be her clinical and research passion. Over the next 40 years, she traveled the world as a sought-after speaker and expert. She is credited with discovering many new workplace allergens and treatments.

Storrs became active in the American Civil Liberties Union and pressed for equal pay for women at the medical school, as she had experienced pay discrimination first hand. She helped launch a national mentoring program in the Women's Dermatologic Society that pairs men with women and women with either gender mentors. "It's an incredibly successful program," says Storrs, now professor emerita. "I'm more proud of the mentorship program than of anything I've ever done." The society honored her with its first mentorship award in 2003, recognizing her influence on "legions of dermatologists, other physicians, medical students and undergraduates."

Right: The first Frances J. Storrs, M.D., Medical Dermatology Lectureship was held in 2009, with Alexa Boer Kimball as its keynote speaker. From left: residents Gretchen Vanderbeek, Karen Minzer-Conzetti, Jeff North, Joseph Sobanko (surgical fellow), Anisha Patel, Kimball, Storrs, Farnaz Fakhari, Justin Leitenberger, Samuel Hopkins, Brooke Sikora.

Opposite page: Research Director Molly Kulesz-Martin (left) was recruited in 1999 to enhance the department's research efforts. Rebecca Bridges (right), research assistant

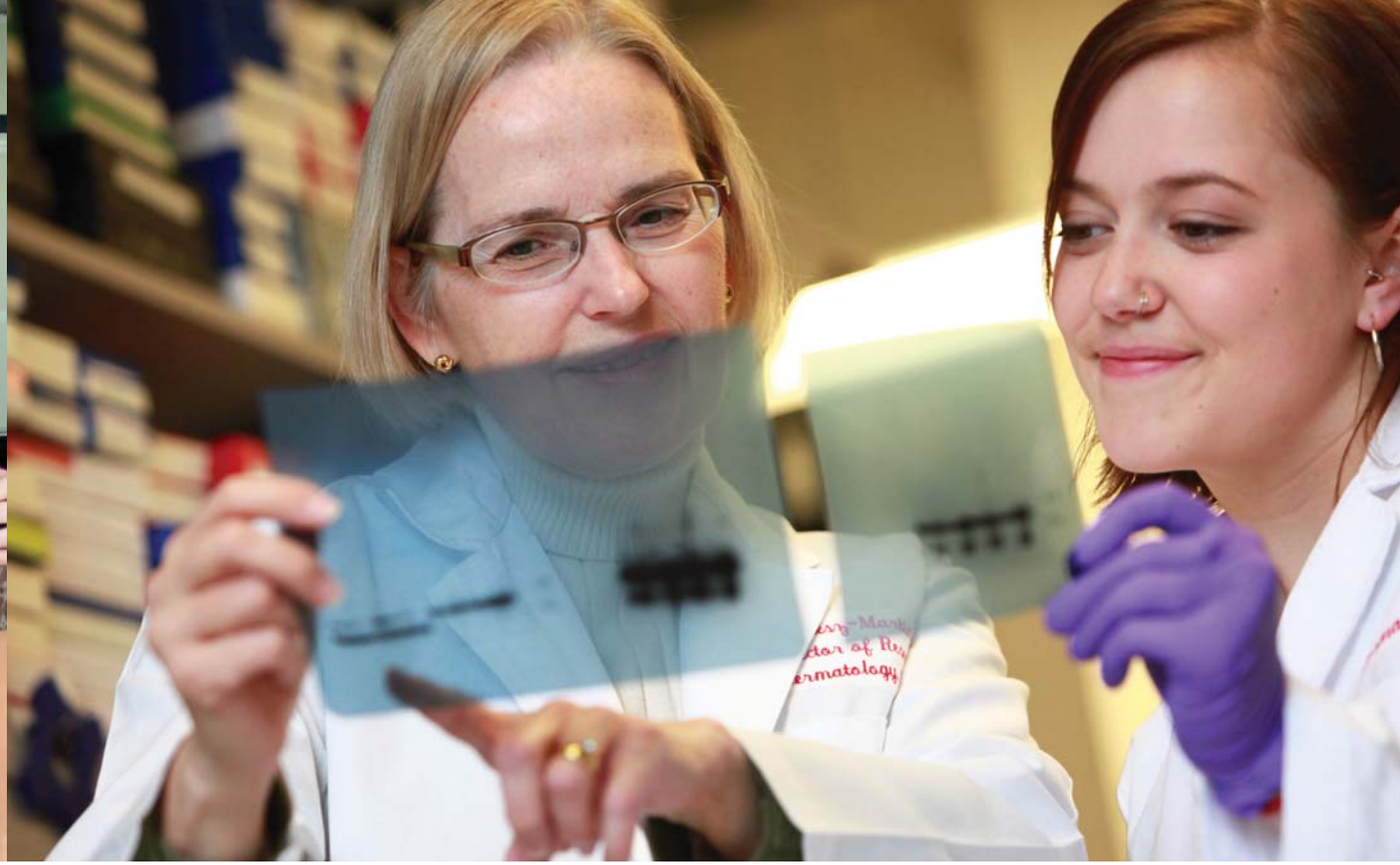
Below: Kulesz-Martin shines as a mentor in 2008 for four female graduates: Gretchen Vanderbeek, Jodi Johnson, Jayme Gallegos and Sally El-Hizawi

Other honors include the American Academy of Dermatology's Master Dermatologist Award, the City Club of Portland's Citizen of the Year 2001, the American Contact Dermatitis Society's Alexander Fisher Lectureship Award and the AAD's highest honor, the Gold Medal.

Sen. Ron Wyden nominated her as a "local legend" – a companion gallery to the National Library of Medicine's Changing Face of Medicine: Celebrating America's Women Physicians exhibition. In 2008, to formally recognize its very own legend, the department and the Storrs Endowment Committee of alumni Patricia Norris, M.D., Baker, Russell, along with James Baker, M.D., created the Frances J. Storrs, M.D. Dermatology Endowed Fund with a goal of endowing a medical dermatology professorship in Storr's name. It is now a lectureship and when fully funded will be the first named professorship in the department. In 2009, there was only one other female-named professorship in the country.

Storrs broke the ice, but 21 years passed before the next female dermatologist joined the faculty. In 1989, Chairman Parker hired Lynne Morrison, M.D., a 1986 graduate, for her expertise in immunodermatology. Another decade passed before Molly Kulesz-Martin, Ph.D., was hired. She accepted the role of research director in 1999.

In 2001, Theresa Schroeder Devere, M.D., joined the faculty and flourished, taking on three top leadership positions during her tenure until she left in 2010: residency director, medical dermatology director and patient care director for the Center of Excellence for Psoriasis and



Psoriatic Arthritis. Melissa Wong, Ph.D., who also has an appointment in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, added basic research strength, coming to department in 2001.

As additional women have been hired, the "firsts" continue to mount. In 2004, Susan Tofte, R.N., F.N.P., earned a faculty assistant professor appointment. Since 1985, Tofte had played an integral role in the department's clinical research efforts, and after she earned her nurse practitioner degree, it was a natural progression to focus her clinical efforts in dermatology. As the department's first non-physician provider, Tofte has paved the way not only in the department, but also within dermatology. In the past five years, non-physician provider growth in dermatology has increased faster than in any other specialty.

In 2008, the department hired its first physician assistant, Kim Biggs Sanders, P.A.-C.

Each new hire brings expertise in another sub-specialty area. In 2006 the first female surgeon, Anna Bar, M.D., a 2005 graduate, was hired. She was followed by the first female pediatric dermatologist, Dawn Siegel, M.D., who came in 2007 fresh from her training at University of California, San Francisco.

Of the current 26 faculty members, women now hold 11 positions, with four of the last six positions filled by women. In terms of residents, the swing is best demonstrated by the actual numbers. Of the 207 overall residents who have been in the OHSU program, 69 have been female (33 percent.)

However, the last ten years show the shift that has occurred – of the 44 residents who have been trained in the department, 27 are female (61 percent). In other universities, women are department heads, are authors of popular textbooks on dermatology and head national organizations. Oregon's own Diane Baker was the second female president of the American Academy of Dermatology, serving in 2008.

"Women dermatologists in their residency training at OHSU, on the faculty and in the community in Oregon have been fortunate enough to be mentored and taught not only by Fran Storrs, but also by male leaders like Jon Hanifin and Neil Swanson," says Baker.

And if Owens-Adair were alive today, she'd be pleased to see the rush of women through the open doors of medicine.

Halprin and Hanifin Figure Prominently in the Founding of Two Nonprofit Patient Organizations

It's no coincidence that Portland is the home of the National Psoriasis Foundation and the original location of the National Eczema Association (formerly the National Eczema Association for Science and Education). OHSU faculty played instrumental roles in the formation of both organizations.

The National Psoriasis Foundation

The National Psoriasis Foundation's story started in 1966 when Beverly Foster's husband gave her a unique birthday present: he placed an ad in the newspaper asking people with psoriasis to call his wife. He thought she would benefit by knowing other people with the disorder. Amazingly, the ad drew about 100 callers.

When Foster's OHSU dermatologist and prominent psoriasis researcher, Kenneth Halprin, M.D., learned of her callers, he urged Foster to form a patient advocacy group. From this group, the National Psoriasis Foundation was chartered in 1968, with Foster serving as its first executive director.

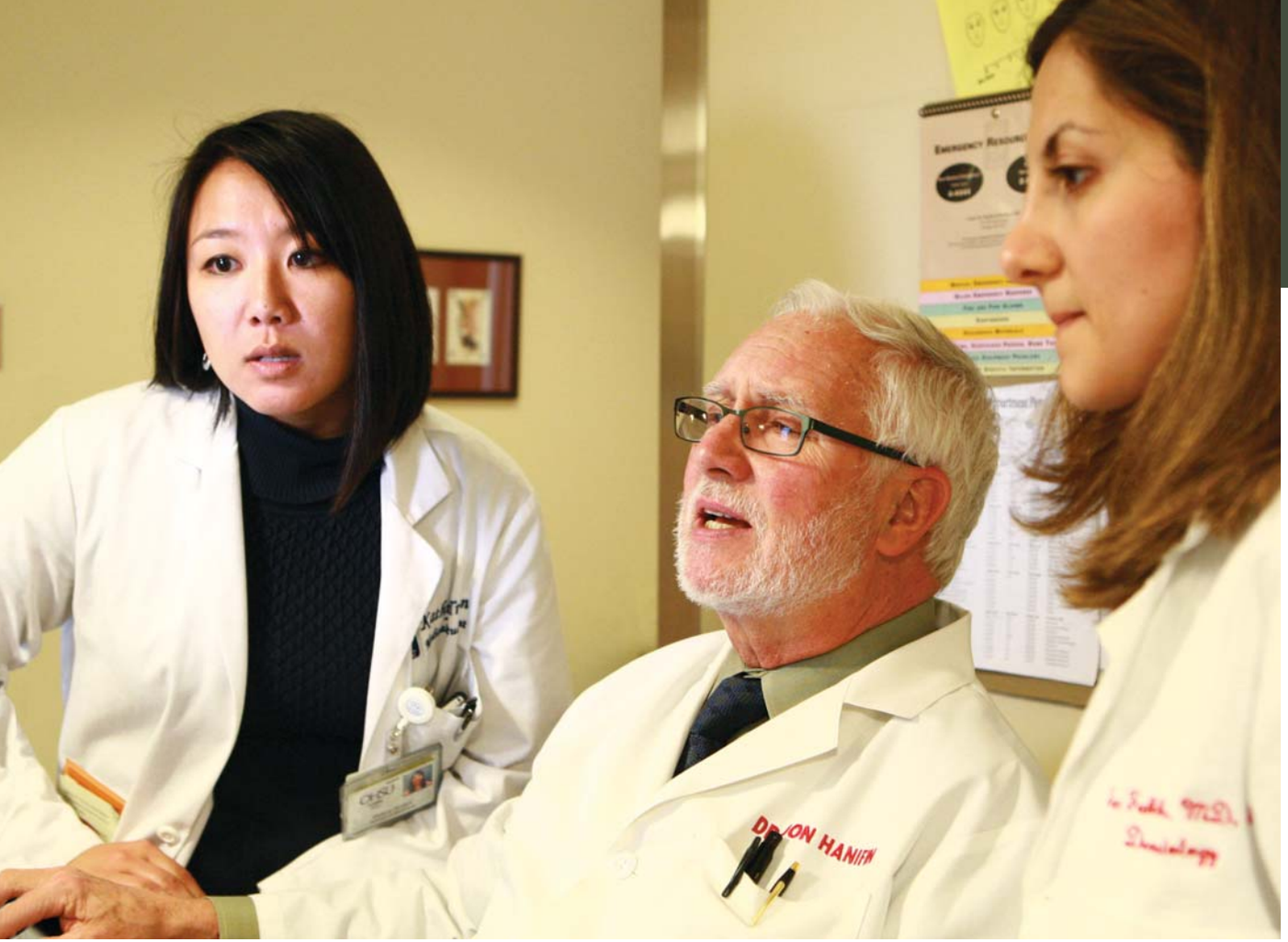
Halprin, who was in the Oregon department from 1962 to 1968, hoped the new nonprofit would raise money for research and awareness for the disease. And, according to Gail Zimmerman, second executive director of the foundation, Halprin suggested the creation of a medical advisory board that would be separate from and not part of the foundation's board of directors.

This separation of the two would allow the board, which consisted of psoriasis patients and family members, to focus on patient needs, while the medical advisers could support those needs and also issues of importance to physicians and researchers.

"Without the medical advisory board, the foundation might have taken a different course," says Zimmerman, who was executive director and CEO for 28 years. "It might not have survived." Thanks to Halprin and then-Chairman Lobitz, the medical advisers included many big names in dermatology who supported the organization and provided credibility in times when other physicians were questioning the role of patient

Right: (from left) Susan Tofte, Jon Hanifin, Colin Holden, Jim Butler (both research fellows from Hanifin's lab in the 1980s) and Diane Baker celebrate in 2009 at the National Eczema Association's 20th Anniversary Gala held to honor Hanifin.

Opposite page: Jon Hanifin in clinic with resident Farnaz Fakhari (right) and an unidentified medical student.



groups and some physicians were starting up competing efforts around the country.

Eventually Halprin moved to Miami and other OHSU faculty members came forward to support the organization. "Jon Hanifin was very helpful to me," says Zimmerman. She recalled a time in the early 1980s when she was not getting much support in trying to figure out ways for the foundation to provide stimulus for research. "Jon took it upon himself to step in. He spent an entire day with me at an [American Academy of Dermatology] meeting, taking me to talk to many researchers about strategies that the foundation could take. That effort eventually led to a larger meeting in Deer Valley, with an outcome being the NPF Tissue Bank."

An interesting side note: In 1988, Halprin and Foster, who were no longer involved in the operations of the foundation and who were living on opposite coasts, met again at the foundation's 20th anniversary celebration in New York. Both were single and ended up getting married. Unfortunately, the duo did not have many years together as Halprin passed away at age 64 in 1995. Foster (then Beverly Halprin) also passed away rather early in life at age 67 in 2003.

National Eczema Association

Hanifin played an even bigger role in the development of another key dermatology advocacy group, the National Eczema Association. As a leading researcher of atopic dermatitis, Hanifin understood the disease and the needs of its sufferers. His experience with the National Psoriasis Foundation provided a good base of knowledge, and in 1989 the National Eczema Association for Science and Education was formed to provide education, raise money for research and advocate on patients' behalf.

The original board of directors were all tied to Hanifin in some way. Current faculty member (who was a clinical research nurse in the department at the time) Tofte, says of her mentor, "He kind of pulled us all into it." Tofte's reference to "all" includes herself, Sai Chan, M.D., who ran Hanifin's lab for more than 20 years, Irene Crosby, a long-time patient and department employee, other patients and an OHSU immunologist and allergist, Anthony Montanaro, M.D.

Twenty years later, Hanifin, Tofte and Crosby continue as board members, leading the on-going effort to support patients with the disease. In celebration of its 20th anniversary, the NEA threw an elaborate gala and fundraising dinner to honor Hanifin. Says Tofte, "Jon is very humble about it. But the truth of it is, it wouldn't exist without him."

Above: Held at the Salishan Lodge on the Oregon Coast, the 57th Symposium's topic in 2008 was *The Biologic Basis of Psoriasis*.

Opposite page: In 2005, Carolyn Hale and Allen Guangun Li view a slide at the 54th Symposium. The topic that year was *Tissue Remodeling and Repair: Molecular Mechanisms and Clinical Challenges*.

The Montagna Symposium on the Biology of Skin: A Colorful History

Laboratory scientists and practicing physicians have traditionally been like Duck and Beaver fans: fields apart. But a symposium with a storied past has thrown leading scientists and frontline dermatologists together every year since 1950. The naming of the conference yields some of its history.

Now known as the Montagna Symposium on the Biology of Skin, it was first called "The Brown Meeting." That's because William Montagna, Ph.D., a comparative cutaneous biologist and primatologist, was working at Brown University when a group of self-described "young Turks," including Lobitz, found him there.

"We decided it might be a good idea if we could sit down together and just talk about the skin," Lobitz recalled during a speech at the 2005 symposium. "There were no prepared talks and no selected subjects. We just sat together for a weekend and picked each other's brains."

After the first gathering, the group decided to select one skin structure. "I think we began with the epidermis," Lobitz recalled. The symposium stayed at Brown until Montagna came to Oregon in 1963, heading the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center.

The primate center hosted the first sessions, but Montagna moved it to the Salishan Lodge resort on the Oregon coast in 1972. And consistent with the state's reputation for growing environmentalists and webbed feet, the Brown Meeting became "The Green Meeting." From 1979 to 1992, OHSU dermatologist Kirk Wuepper, M.D., directed the conference. David Norris, M.D., of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and Wuepper co-chaired the symposium in 1991 and 1992, but in 1993, a year before Wuepper's death, Norris moved the symposium to Snowmass, Colo.

The conference returned to Salishan in 2004. "We're proud once again to host this historic symposium," says Kulesz-Martin, the OHSU dermatology director of research and symposium co-chair with Jackie Bickenbach, Ph.D., of the University of Iowa.

Baker, a resident graduate from 1974, who also worked in Wuepper's lab, says "It's the only conference I know that allows those of us seeing patients to interact with Ph.D. scientists who are doing the research that won't immediately translate but may make a huge difference down the line."

The Montagna Symposium continues to draw leading scientists, research clinicians and residents and fellows from across the country to exchange of ideas and to hear results around a single topic: the biologic basis of psoriasis in 2008 and the genetic-epigenetic basis of skin diseases in 2009. Said long-time symposium participant Storrs, "I saw collaborations being forged right before my very eyes!"