

# Quillen

MAGAZINE  
FALL 2017

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**A Military Friendly  
Medical School**

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Empowering and  
Overcoming**

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Dr. Dorsha James

**Toward Serving  
the Underserved**

Dr. Alyssa Pfister  
Now Calls Africa  
'Home'





**ON THE COVER:**

*These eight veterans are among the members of the Quillen Class of 2021*

**Quillen Magazine**

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ETSU President

**Dr. Wilsie Bishop**  
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The Quillen College of Medicine has been an important part of East Tennessee State University and the Tri-Cities region since 1978 when we welcomed our first class of students. Since that time, our medical students, faculty and alumni have left footprints on this campus, this region and across the globe. They are footprints that lead toward improvement in health care delivery. They are footprints that

lead toward new practices for training rural primary care physicians. They are footprints that lead toward new discoveries through research. They are footprints that ultimately transform and enrich the lives of thousands of others.

As health care professionals, we have the opportunity to change people’s lives on a daily basis – and our alumni are doing just that. Take, for instance, Dr. Alyssa Pfister, a member of the Quillen Class of 2005, who now calls the African country of Burundi her home. There, Dr. Pfister not only cares for some of the most underserved people of the world, but also teaches the next generation of Burundian doctors. Then there’s Dr. Dorsha James, also a member of the Class of 2005, who uses her own personal experiences of growing up poor in Michigan to help guide her in her dedication to giving back.

Our students are changing lives as well. Those taking part in Quillen’s community medicine clerkship in Sevierville worked throughout the past year to create educational materials to help those affected by last year’s wildfires in Gatlinburg. Quillen students hosted dozens of events to provide educational information and free health screenings to the people of the region.

Likewise, our faculty have continued to conduct meaningful research, much of which focuses on the issues most significantly impacting Central Appalachia. This research is in addition to their work in classrooms and clinics to teach the next generation of physicians. It is research touching on everything from Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome to diabetes management.

All of these stories and so many more are featured in this issue of Quillen magazine, offering us an opportunity to celebrate in the footprints we have left in our medical school’s 43-year history while also affording me the chance to ask each of you to consider one question: Where are your footprints leading?

Dr. Robert T. Means, Jr.  
Dean, Quillen College of Medicine

# Fast Facts

**7<sup>TH</sup>**

7th in the nation  
for rural medicine  
training  
*(U.S. News & World  
Report)*

**20<sup>TH</sup>**

20th in the nation for  
producing medical doctors  
who go into family medicine  
*(Study in the Journal of Family Medicine)*



Over **\$2.1  
MILLION** in  
uncompensated  
care provided



**40** clinics/clinical  
service areas

**181 CLINICIANS** and  
**476 NON-CLINICIAN  
STAFF** working at Quillen  
medical clinics



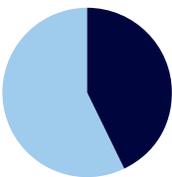
**252**  
medical  
residents



**276,000**  
patient  
encounters  
per year



**2,007**  
Quillen College of  
Medicine M.D. alumni



Approximately  
**43 PERCENT**  
of alumni work in  
Tennessee



**277**  
**STUDENTS**  
enrolled at the  
medical school



**\$500 MILLION**  
annual economic  
impact on the region



# Military Friendly

Quillen College of Medicine has a reputation for being “military friendly.” In 2015 alone, 10 percent of the graduating class entered the military, and a considerable number of students come to Quillen with previous military experience.

Anyone can take a look around and see why students with military aspirations or experience would gravitate toward Quillen. It is located on the historically-significant Veterans Affairs Campus, which is anchored by the Quillen VA Medical Center at Mountain Home. Quillen’s close proximity to veteran care is one of many reasons why it’s a good fit for military-minded students.

“It’s about comrades in arms, a bonding that veterans get that they don’t necessarily want, but it’s common among these men and women because they’ve done and seen things that the rest of the world hasn’t,” said Doug Taylor, associate dean for Admissions and Records at Quillen College of Medicine. “I think that’s part of it. They like our environment here and they like being next to a VA Medical Center. They are very close to their brothers and sisters and they think they can help them by being here, and they can.”

The unique bond Taylor speaks of is evident among students and alumni, and a special part of the interview process. Quillen alum Dr. Bryan Helsel (Class of 2000), now a thoracic surgeon with Mountain States Medical Group, said he immediately bonded with classmates who had been in the military and adhered to a similar philosophy. “We treated medical school like a job, just like the military,” Helsel said.

When third-year student Drew Smith came to interview at Quillen, he was immediately connected to the thriving military community and has since offered the same hospitality for applicants.

“What made Quillen my choice was the visit and chance to work with veterans,” Smith said. “There are military leadership principles in place here, which is evident in how they formulate a syllabus. The interview experience stood out for me when I observed the curriculum.”

Taylor, who oversees Admissions and Records at Quillen is a Vietnam veteran, which probably explains the ultra-organized interview experience encountered by applicants. He is Quillen’s very own Uncle Sam who encourages those with military experience or aspirations to apply to Quillen. His “we want you”





attitude helps give Quillen its “military friendly” status. Plus, the college boasts at least 13 faculty members who are veterans.

“These men and women, they have miles in their rearview mirrors, that others don’t have,” Taylor said. “They’ve got leadership and experience in the real world. They’re motivated and dedicated.”

Several years ago, Taylor and others at Quillen started the “Vets Welcome” website to attract and welcome highly qualified students with a passion for military service. In fact, it was this website that piqued Smith’s interest in a school, and city, he had never heard of before.

“Anytime a school gets a recognition related to vets, there’s something special about that,” he said. “Quillen does a good job at putting it into practice.”

Provisions in the VA Choice Act allow Smith to be considered an in-state student. Growing up a military brat himself, “home” is a relative term, especially after serving four international deployments, three of them as a pilot and flight instructor in the Navy.

“It means a lot to veterans when a school is willing to take a chance on us and realize that we have something else to bring to the table,” Smith said.

East Tennessee State University has received the “military friendly” designation by Victory Media for eight consecutive years. This designation makes Quillen appealing to those with prior military

**“Any time a school gets a recognition related to vets, there’s something special about that. Quillen does a good job putting it into practice.”**

*– Drew Smith*

service, as well as those attending medical school through the Health Profession Scholarship Program (HPSP), like Dr. Jacqueline Vidosh Battistelli (Class of 2011). Although she was commissioned to the U.S. Air Force, she said fit was ultimately more important than the military friendliness of a school.

“The fact that Quillen was friendly to the military was icing on the cake,” she said.

She and Helsel both credited Quillen for fully preparing them to take on the rigorous challenges of a military residency program, Battistelli in OB-GYN and Helsel in general surgery. Helsel attended West Point and flew helicopters for eight years before attending Quillen. Upon graduation, he served as a surgeon and was deployed across the globe before retiring from the Army earlier this year.

“There has never been a day when I didn’t feel as prepared as anyone else in the room,” he said.

The first class to enter Quillen College of Medicine in 1978 included several veterans, and 11 percent of students in the Class of 2021 have ties to the military. It’s a trend Taylor says will continue into the foreseeable future.

“There’s an amazing group of people coming out of the military that are very centered on continuing their education and who care about their country,” he said. “I think we had to be a military friendly school being where we are. Several years ago, there was a sign at the VA that said, ‘The price of freedom is visible here.’ And it truly is.”

## Quillen Changes Curriculum for More Cohesive Educational Experience

Students who began their medical school journeys at Quillen in Fall 2017 are seeing a different curriculum than their predecessors as leaders at the school work to create a more cohesive educational experience.

“No two medical curricula are the same,” said Dr. Ken Olive, executive associate dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs. “There is a huge body of information that medical students must learn. They have to pull all the pieces together to make it a cohesive whole.”

Through adjustments at both the pre-clinical and clinical levels, the curriculum changes aim to assist medical students in being able to do that.

“They take nine basic sciences courses over the first two years of medical school,” Olive noted. “We decided to run four to five of

**“There is a huge body of information that medical students must learn. They have to pull all the pieces together to make a cohesive whole. We are attempting to help students make connections of those individual pieces.”**

– Dr. Ken Olive

them simultaneously over longer periods of time so that the content is aligned. By aligning topics, we are attempting to help the students make connections of those individual pieces, and we felt that would give the students a better grasp on concepts.”

The Doctoring 1 course, and its subsequent Doctoring 2 course to be offered in the second year of medical



school, offer a different, more active learning methodology for students while also providing more opportunities for faculty members to work together to teach their students, Olive added.

The changes will also allow for exams to take place at the same time, which will give faculty the ability to create tests that replicate licensing exams and better prepare students for the licensure process.

“It also gives them more time to study for the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 exams, both of which are being increasingly used as filters for residency positions,” said Dr. Robert Schoborg, the vice chair of education in the Department of Biomedical Sciences.

Another critical aim of the changes is to allow the fourth year of medical school to begin earlier.

“Currently, they finish their third year of medical school at the end of June and the fourth year starts in July, and residency applications are due by September 15,” Olive explained. “We plan to move the fourth-year start date back by six weeks, which means the third year will have to move back, too.”

This fall, the transition began with a two-week bump back of the start date for Quillen. Next year, third-year clerkships will be shorted by one week, for that year only, to further adjust the calendar, Olive said.



“This will also allow students to take a larger number of away rotations in their fourth year before residency applications are due, which is important in their career selection process,” Schoborg said. “In medical school, the amount and complexity of knowledge steadily increases. The changes not only help the students, but also will help Quillen better identify both gaps and unnecessary redundancy in the curriculum.”

## Quillen Serving as National Model for Career Advisement Program



Several years ago, leaders at Quillen College of Medicine recognized a need to offer better career advisement opportunities for medical students. Now, their solution is serving as a national model.

“We had been experiencing student dissatisfaction with career planning,” said Dr. Ken Olive, executive associate dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs. “We assigned advisors from Day One, but the students weren’t going to see them. We started looking at what motivates medical students, and in the first two years, it is grades.”

With that in mind, Olive and Dr. Tom Kwasigroch, associate dean for Student Affairs, proposed a curriculum change that made career exploration mandatory for all Quillen students via a three-year course called the Career Explorations Program.

The course involves self-assessments that help individuals determine what type of doctors they might be best suited to become. It also includes a variety of requirements to better prepare students to make these significant career decisions.

“In that first year, physicians from different specialties come do panel discussions, the students learn how to prepare a curriculum vitae (CV), they commit to looking at specialties and they meet one-on-one

**“This is important because we want students to pursue careers they’ll feel fulfilled and happy in because they’re going to be better physicians that way.”**

– Dr. Ken Olive

with a faculty advisor for exploration of interests and abilities,” Olive said. “In the second and third years, there are more panels, they update their CVs and they meet with the advisor again. Finally, they select a clinical advisor to help them as they approach their final year of medical school.”

The Class of 2012 was the first class to complete the revamped career advising at Quillen, and students in each class thereafter have taken part.

“It has had markedly positive outcomes and we plan on continuing it for the foreseeable future,” Olive said. “This is important because we want students to pursue careers they’ll feel fulfilled and happy in because they’re going to be better physicians that way.”

Last year, *Academic Medicine Innovation Reports* published an article by Olive, Kwasigroch and their colleagues, Dr. Daniel Wooten, professor; Cynthia Lybrand, medical education coordinator; and Catherine Peebles, clinical medical education coordinator. The article, “A Career Exploration Program: An Effective Alternative to the Traditional Use of Faculty Advisors,” details the approach taken by Quillen to improve career exploration among its students and the outcomes of the Career Exploration Program.

“When we were looking at what to do, we couldn’t find anybody who had done this as a required curricular element,” Olive said. “It’s great to have this published so other medical schools might be able to learn from it and find something that works for them.”

# Community Footprints

## Making a difference



The Southeastern Library Association honored the Quillen medical library with the **2016 OUTSTANDING PROGRAM AWARD** for its “Program to Provide Consumer Health Information at Remote Area Medical Clinics.” Each year, librarians staff booths at the Remote Area Medical clinics held in the region to provide on-site consumer health information to hundreds of uninsured attendees.

A group of **20 MEDICAL STUDENTS, FOUR PHYSICIANS AND A RESIDENT TRAVELED TO BELIZE LAST FALL** to run a clinic with Body and Soul Ministries. The team was able to see over 400 patients, treating a variety of illnesses.

In May, Quillen medical students partnered with The Good Faith Clinic to **OFFER FREE ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICAL EXAMS** to medical uninsured individuals in McMinn and Meigs counties.

In October 2017, Quillen student groups hosted a **PANEL DISCUSSION ADDRESSING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC SWEEPING THE NATION**. ETSU experts discussed everything from how opioid use and abuse reached epidemic proportions to the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to treatment and prevention. The panel discussion was one of several opioid-related events that took place at Quillen as part of National Medical Student Advocacy Week.

Every summer, Quillen offers rural high school students eyeing a career in medicine the opportunity to take part in the **RURAL HIGH SCHOOL MEDICAL SUMMER CAMP**. The camp is geared toward rising juniors and seniors or recent graduates of high schools in rural areas who want to become physicians and includes information on various health sciences fields as well as field trips and hands-on lectures.



More than **70 CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES ATTENDED A “NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM,”** an educational event hosted in the spring by students, residents and faculty from the Department of Pediatrics, in coordination with Niswonger Children’s Hospital and the Hands On! Regional Museum.



Dr. Tom Kwasigroch took a pie to the face in the spring as a participant in the **“PIE IN THE SKY” FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE FOR SMALL MIRACLES EQUESTRIAN CENTER**, a horseback riding facility for children and adults with special needs. As one of the “Pie Troopers,” Kwas helped raise money for the organization, where several Quillen students volunteer, and then willingly was hit in the face with a pie for his efforts.

Quillen students hosted a **24-HOUR GAMING CHALLENGE** for the kids of Niswonger Children’s Hospital. With over 70 participants and several local sponsors, the students **RAISED AN ESTIMATED \$1,500** through the effort.

**FOUR FIRST-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS CONDUCTED A CARDIOVASCULAR EDUCATION PROGRAM** at Cherokee High School in Rogersville as a “cardiovascular intervention” with ninth grade wellness students.

# Helping After the Wildfires



Photo courtesy of WJHL

Quillen College of Medicine students taking part in a community medicine clerkship in Sevierville are working on a project to help address the ongoing needs of those impacted by the devastating wildfires that occurred in the area late last year.

“Working in the health clinics there, patient after patient came in and would talk about how the fires affected them, even all of these months later,” said rising fourth-year medical student Becky Roland. “So many people were affected, even if their own homes or businesses didn’t burn down. I realized that East Tennesseans are strong people, but they may still have a hard time coping.”

Groups of approximately 10 ETSU medical students rotate through the Sevierville clerkship for six weeks at a time. The project began with the students who were working in Sevierville just a month and a half after the wildfires ripped through the region, destroying homes, businesses and a large part of the city of Gatlinburg.

That group set to work creating a needs assessment of the community by conducting a survey focused particularly on mental health needs. The assessment revealed a need for more education about

posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and assistance in getting individuals directed to resources that could help those potentially suffering from PTSD.

“A lot of these folks have never heard of PTSD or think it is something that only happens to people who go to war,” Roland said. “Plus, right now, there’s a lot of people without work or insurance, and then there’s the stigma that surrounds mental

**“I realized that East Tennesseans are strong people, but they may still have a hard time coping.”**

– Becky Roland

health. It’s a perfect storm where people don’t know what they can do to get help once they realize they didn’t just bounce back from this.”

At the end of February, the second clerkship group carried on the project, advancing it through the creation of educational and informational materials.

“We read the needs assessment the first group did and chose to create an educational pamphlet that targets the medically underserved population in that region,” Roland said. “The goal was to create a pamphlet that included educational materials, questions for them to use to conduct a self-assessment and a list of resources available in the community.”

The medical students also produced a Spanish-language version of the pamphlet in order to reach more people who might be in need of help. The group then determined initial distribution points for the pamphlet.

In May, a third group headed to Sevierville to start the clerkship program. Those students continued the project by distributing pamphlets. The group also will conduct follow-up work and research the effectiveness of the overall project.

“This has been a really fulfilling project,” Roland said. “We really just wanted to get the word out that it is normal to feel that way and there is help out there. Hopefully, this pamphlet can do that.”

# ETSU Researchers Begin Work to Create NAS Database

Researchers working with East Tennessee State University's Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment began creating a Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) database last fall under the guidance of Dr. Beth Bailey, professor and director of Primary Care research in Quillen's Department of Family Medicine.

"There are currently no studies demonstrating long-term outcomes for NAS babies," Bailey said. "The creation of a NAS database will have a significant impact on NAS moms and babies here and, likely, across the country."

Researchers at ETSU are extracting retrospective data from previous NAS cases – without any patient identifiers – and collecting data from current NAS cases as they arise. They are looking at 80-some variables, from the type of drugs used and where the mother got prenatal care to any services involved in treating the children, in hopes that the analysis of the data will help with more effective treatment for NAS babies.

The goal is to better understand what worked in treating the infants as well as problems these children may begin to encounter in later years.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 21,732 babies in the United States were born with NAS in 2012, a five-fold increase since 2000. The national incidence of NAS in 2012 was 5.8 per 1,000 live births and Tennessee's rate during the same year was nearly twice that rate at 11 per 1,000 live births. Currently, East Tennessee is experiencing some of the highest NAS rates in the nation.

The establishment of the NAS database is due, in part, to a grant from the Junior League of Johnson City.

## Behavioral Specialist Joins Team at Quillen ETSU Physicians Pediatrics Office



The Department of Pediatrics clinic at Quillen ETSU Physicians hired Dr. Matthew Tolliver to serve as a behavioral specialist and provide integrated care to patients of the facility.

“Traditionally, it is pretty well known that behavioral appointments, when they get set up through referral, have huge no-show rates,” said Dr. Gayatri Jaishankar, a pediatrician at the clinic and an associate professor at Quillen. “The idea here is that you already have the patient in your office so by having the behavioral specialist here, too, there’s not that huge missed opportunity. The success rate of that can’t be matched by making an appointment for a later date.”

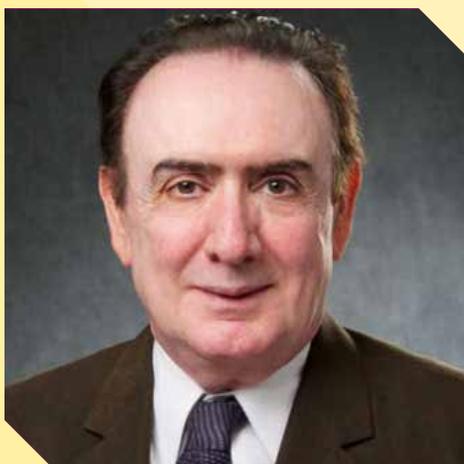
The “warm hand-off” of patients from their trusted pediatrician to a behavioral specialist not only ensures that the patient makes it to see the specialist, but also reduces the stigma around seeing one, she noted. When a patient is at an appointment with his or her pediatrician, for anything from a well-visit to an unexpected illness, Tolliver is able to come in and meet with that patient if the pediatrician thinks it would be beneficial.

“I see families to address a broad range of concerns, from children with general behavior problems, ADHD, picky eating, or sleep problems to teens with anxiety and depression” Tolliver said. Having a behavioral specialist on hand right there at the clinic also allows for more preventative behavioral care that could nip an otherwise much larger problem in the bud.

The team-based care method is not new for the clinic. “The department has been on the cutting-edge of interprofessional practice and education for years with part-time, student-led psychology and social work services built into the flow of the primary care team,” said Dr. Jodi Polaha, a clinical psychologist and associate professor at Quillen. “This hire of Dr. Tolliver further demonstrates their commitment to this progressive model.”

Tolliver’s excitement to be able to provide better team care for the patient is only matched by his excitement to work with ETSU health sciences students and further train them in the interprofessional model of providing health care. “This sets the pediatrics department and this clinic up to be a national leader in integrated care,” he said.

## Quillen ETSU Physicians Creates Medical Genetics Program



ETSU’s Quillen College of Medicine, with support from Mountain States Health Alliance, expanded its work in pediatric, prenatal and adult genetics.

The new Division of Medical Genetics is overseen by Dr. M.J. Hajianpour, a board-certified clinical geneticist and clinical cytogeneticist with extensive experience in the field.

Through the clinical offices at Quillen ETSU Physicians, the Division of Medical Genetics will provide services to pediatric and adult patients with genetic conditions, multiple congenital anomalies,

dysmorphic features, developmental delays and intellectual disabilities.

“Our goal is to provide a full-service genetics program,” said Dr. David Wood, chair of the Department of Pediatrics, where the Division of Medical Genetics is housed. “The program will include general genetics, biochemical genetics, prenatal genetics, neurogenetics and cancer genetics.”

# Faculty & Staff Footprints

Toward leaving their mark



## Dr. Beth Anne Fox

Dr. Beth Anne Fox (Family Medicine) was awarded the status of Certified Physician Executive and appointed to the American Academy of Family Physicians Commission on Health of the Public and Science.



## Dr. Valentin Yakubenko

Dr. Valentin Yakubenko (Biomedical Sciences) received the Award for Outstanding Research from the Council on Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology.



## Dr. Jeffrey Summers

Dr. Jeffrey Summers (Internal Medicine) was named chair of the Department of Internal Medicine. Summers has worked within the Quillen College of Medicine, both as a faculty member and as a clinician seeing patients at ETSU Physicians and Associates, since 2000.



## Dr. David Williams

Dr. David Williams (Surgery) was named the second-ever Carroll Hardy Long Chair of Excellence for Surgical Research.



## Dr. Joseph Florence

Dr. Joseph Florence (Family Medicine) was honored for helping establish a dedicated training center in India where medical professionals can learn how to treat and respond to emergencies related to the heart.



## Nakia Woodward

The Southern Chapter of the Medical Library Association named Nakia Woodward (Medical Library) its Academic Librarian of the Year.



### **Dr. Paul Stanton**

Dr. Paul Stanton, president emeritus and professor emeritus of surgery, was inducted into the Tennessee Health Care Hall of Fame.



### **Dr. Karl Goodkin**

Dr. Karl Goodkin (Psychiatry) assisted in the development of the new Dementia Management Measurement Set as a member of the Dementia Management Update Quality Measurement Set Work Group.



### **Dr. Evan Los**

Results of a study by Dr. Evan Los (Pediatrics) to assess the reliability of diabetes alert dogs were published in the *Journal of Diabetes Science & Technology*. Los also presented his findings to the American Diabetes Association.



### **Richard Wallace**

Richard Wallace (Medical Library) received the 2017 Bert C. Bach Servant Leadership Award. The honor comes with a new car.



### **Dr. Reid Blackwelder**

Dr. Reid Blackwelder (Family Medicine) was named chair of the Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Blackwelder also traveled to Ireland and Scotland in the spring to help educate health care professionals there in interprofessional education and practice.

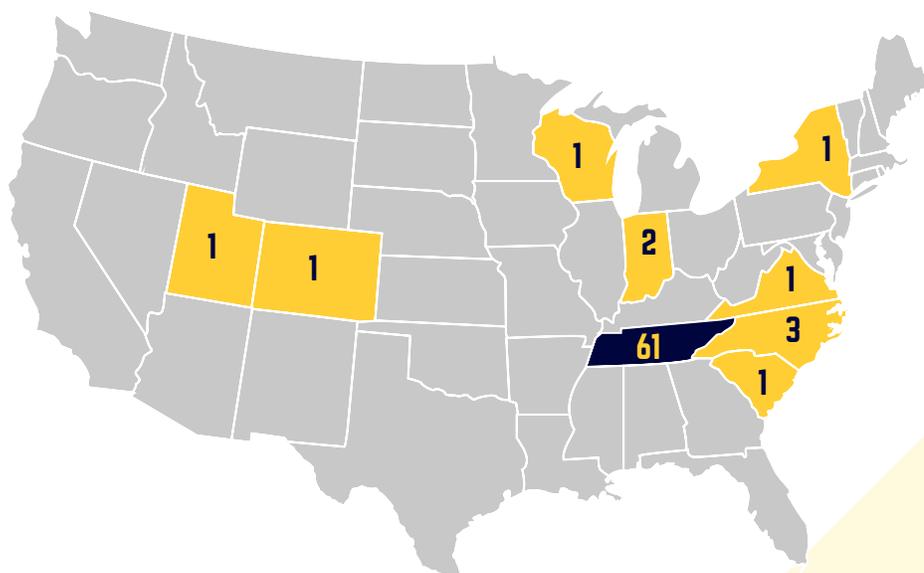
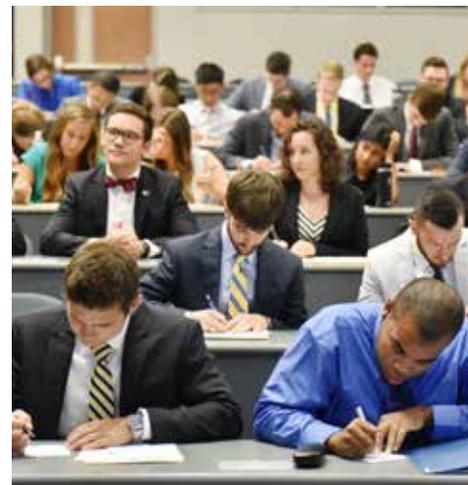


### **Dr. Caroline Abercrombie**

Dr. Caroline Abercrombie (Anatomy Lab) was awarded The Jack E. Mobley MD Memorial Award for Excellence in Innovation.

# Class of 2021

Joins the Quillen family



## Colleges where class members received their undergraduate degree: *(include but not limited to)*

- East Tennessee State University (8)
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville (20)
- Vanderbilt University (3)
- Princeton University (1)
- Wake Forest University (1)
- NYU (1)
- Boston University (1)
- Clemson University (1)
- Baylor University (1)

The newest Quillen students were welcomed into the Quillen family as members of the Class of 2021 during a White Coat Ceremony held in July. In all, there are 72 members in the class, 61 of whom hail from somewhere in Tennessee. Other states represented in the class include North Carolina (3); Illinois (2); and one each from Utah, Colorado, Wisconsin, New York, Virginia and South Carolina.

# Student Footprints

## Third-Year Student Appointed to Advisory Panel for USMLE Program



A third-year Quillen student has been appointed to serve on a panel that advises the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) program.

Alexandra Imani Chatman will serve on the USMLE Medical Student and Resident Advisory Panel for two years, beginning in January 2018. The panel is made up of 15 students and

residents from allopathic and osteopathic programs across the country as well as a public member jointly appointed by the Federation of State Medical Boards and the National Board of Medical Examiners.

“I am thrilled to serve as one of the members of the USMLE Student and Resident Advisory Panel,” Chatman said. “It is a great honor to represent the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine at this level.”

As part of the panel, Chatman is charged with assisting USMLE staff in working through operational issues directly impacting the examinee experience of the exam and also serves as an additional resource to inform more substantive policy questions as well as serving as an informal ambassador for the program. Topics the panel may be asked to address or weigh in on include strategic enhancements to the USMLE, communication strategies to examinees, performance feedback to examinees, the testing day experience and changes in the USMLE policy.

Chatman is from Murfreesboro, where her parents (both members of the Quillen Class of 1989) are practicing physicians. She serves as the president for the Quillen Class of 2019 and is a member of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Interest Group executive board. Chatman also serves on the planning committee and as a member for Integrated Grand Rounds.



## Trio of Quillen Students Chosen for Participation in National Emerging Leader Institute

Three Quillen medical students were selected for a highly competitive scholarship from the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation. As a result of being selected as part of the AAFP Emerging Leader Institute, Josh Wienczkowski (Class of 2017), Hayden Shafer (Class of 2017) and Katie McCall (Class of 2019) each spent a year taking part in the leadership development program.

The Emerging Leader Institute focuses on ensuring the future of the Family Medicine specialty by increasing the number of future Family Medicine leaders and provides training for this important role. During the program, each participant completes a project relevant to his/her chosen track – Personal and Practice Leadership; Policy and Public Health Leadership; or Philanthropic and Mission-Driven Leadership.

Wienczkowski’s project addressed end-of-life literacy and aimed to educate the next generation of physicians in dying and death. The point-of-care tool walks medical students and residents through the most common scenarios of death and dying discussions. It is designed to fill in the gaps in medical education and offer a step-by-step approach to the most common end-of-life care discussions a medical student or resident is likely to encounter. His project was given the Best Project Award for the Personal and Practice Leadership Track of the Emerging Leaders Institute. The resource can be found at [www.endoflifeliteracy.com](http://www.endoflifeliteracy.com).

Shafer’s project addressed the integration of naloxone rescue education into the Family Medicine clerkship curriculum. His project was named as one of the top two student projects in the Policy and Public Health Leadership track of the Emerging Leaders Institute. McCall, who took part in the Philanthropic and Mission-Driven Leadership track, completed a project called “Surviving Mountain City: A Medical Student’s Guide.” The three Quillen students were among just 15 medical students selected from across the nation to take part in the Emerging Leader Institute.

## Ochsenbein receives Medal of Valor from the White House



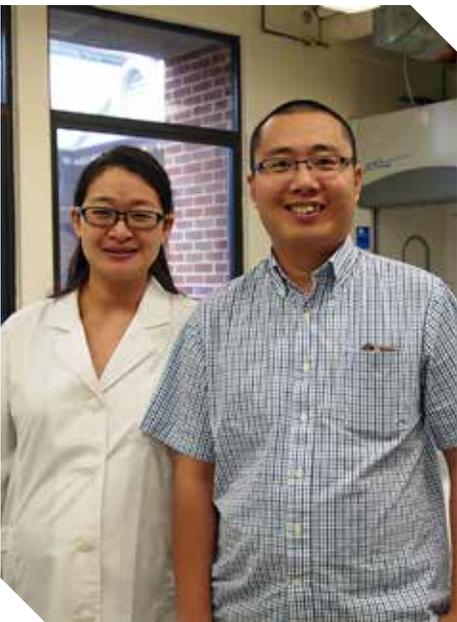
In 2016, Dr. Sean Ochsenbein, a member of the Class of 2017, received an Unsung Hero award from East Tennessee State University for pulling a man from a burning car and, more than likely, saving the man's life. In 2017, Ochsenbein continued to be recognized for his efforts and dedication, only now on the national level.

Within weeks of graduating from Quillen, Ochsenbein received the Dr. Alexandra Greene Medical Student Award from the Emergency Medicine Residents' Association (EMRA) during the organization's spring meeting in Orlando. The award recognizes a third- or fourth-year medical student who displays significant dedication to emergency medicine, going out of his way for patients and colleagues while demonstrating compassion and professionalism. The award honors the memory of Allie Greene, a fourth-year medical student at UC Davis School of Medicine whose passion for emergency medicine led her to volunteer throughout the United States and in developing countries. Greene died in a plane crash in 2007, just weeks before graduation.

"Sean shares all the best traits that made Allie Greene exceptional: dedication, compassion, a heart for service," said EMRA President-Elect Dr. Zach Jarou, who made note of Ochsenbein's serving as an emergency medical technician for several years. "During his days with EMS, he risked his own life to save another." Perhaps the most significant honor, Ochsenbein found out a short time later that he is a recipient of the Medal of Valor, the nation's highest award for valor. It is an honor bestowed upon him by U.S. President Donald Trump and it recognizes Ochsenbein for "exhibiting great courage and unwavering dedication to our country" and recognizing his "extraordinary acts."

Ochsenbein and 11 others received the honor for 2015-16. Prior to coming to Quillen, Ochsenbein spent several years working as an Emergency Medical Technician with the Putnam County Rescue Squad. He began his emergency medicine residency at Wake Forest University over the summer.

## Two Ph.D. students take positions at Ivy League medical schools



Two Ph.D. students at Quillen accepted postdoctoral positions at Ivy League schools following graduation from ETSU earlier this year.

Xiaohui Wang, a student in the Department of Surgery and the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program, completed a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Biomedical Sciences following a successful dissertation defense in June 2017. While at ETSU, Wang was a member of the institution's Center of Excellence for Inflammation, Infectious Disease and Immunity, and received several honors as a student here. Following graduation, he accepted a postdoctoral position at Harvard Medical

School, where he is focusing on research that explores the role of the immune system in cancer development and therapy.

Dr. Xia Zhang earned her Ph.D. in Biomedical Science at ETSU in August 2016. She describes the scope of her research primarily as "focusing on the in vivo functions of Wnt signaling and their mechanisms..." Zhang, who was also a member of the Center of Excellence for Inflammation, Infectious Disease and Immunity, later accepted a position as a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Pharmacology at the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut.

# Match Day 2017

## By the Numbers

**100%**  
match rate

**50%**  
of the class entered  
primary care

**24 GRADUATES** went on to continue their training at **INSTITUTIONS IN TENNESSEE** and an additional **22 STUDENTS** are training at **INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN REGION**

Residency training positions in **13 DIFFERENT SPECIALTIES/SUB-SPECIALTIES** at **40 RESIDENCY SITES** throughout the United States

**4 MEMBERS** of the class are completing their residency training through **MILITARY SERVICE**

**9 STUDENTS** entered **EMERGENCY MEDICINE**. Another **6 STUDENTS** matched in **ANESTHESIOLOGY**; **3** matched in **DERMATOLOGY**; **2** matched in **OPHTHALMOLOGY** and **1** matched in each **ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY** and **RADIATION ONCOLOGY**.



# Toward Teaching, Empowering and Overcoming

## The Story of Dr. Dorsha James

Dr. Dorsha James, a member of the Quillen College of Medicine Class of 2005, will tell you almost anything about herself. Right off the bat, James lets you know she is an “open book.”

The description is apropos for a woman who credits reading with taking her from growing up poor in the projects of Pontiac, MI, to being perched on a sand dune halfway around the world in Dubai.

“I should have been one of those statistics but by the grace of God, and thanks to my mom giving me books, I’m not,” James says. “My mom would get us books all the time and I escaped the situation I was in because I could read those books.”

Her situation was a dire one.

James was just four years old when her father was sent to prison for 15 years. Prior to his departure, James remembers her mother telling the story of her dad kidnapping her, along with her sister, and keeping them from her mother for over a week. She also tells of her dad “dangling one of us out the window” and several other instances of domestic violence.

James’ mother raised her and her sister as a single mom, turning to government assistance to make ends even remotely meet while also attending college to try to better herself.

It was when James was in the eighth grade that she decided she wanted to become a doctor, after an experience at a hospital left her determined to somehow improve the health care system.

“In 1991, my grandmother got very, very, very sick. She was 61 and on a ventilator,”

James recalls. “I remember very vividly the pulmonary doctor coming in and giving us the horrible news with absolutely no compassion whatsoever. I was in the eighth grade and even I knew you had to give bad news better than that.

“I made up my mind that day that I was going to be a doctor and I’d never deliver bad news that way to anyone. I would not do families like that.”

During high school, James’ mom relocated the family to Columbia, Tennessee, a move that James laughingly refers to as “going from Motown to Muletown.”

“It was a big-time culture change,” she admits. “Shortly after moving, though, I ended up with a full scholarship to attend the University of Memphis.”

After getting her bachelor’s degree in biology, James was ready to go to medical school, but couldn’t afford the costs associated with med school interviews. She saved up enough money by working for a year as both a pharmacy technician and a patient registration clerk at an area hospital.

She applied and interviewed at Quillen and the University of Tennessee, ultimately deciding to come to ETSU and, to this day, calls it “the best choice” she could have made.

“We got so much individual attention and it was so personalized,” she says. “It was just such a great experience.”

After completing an emergency medicine residency at Vanderbilt University – she was the first African-American female to be picked for that particular residency



program – in 2008, James went to work in the emergency department of the same hospital where she once worked as a registration clerk. She also spent a year serving as a medical director for a hospital in Fayetteville.

Today, at age 39, James lives in Nashville and works as an emergency doctor at a hospital in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. She has also created her own telemedicine business, Campus Rx, which provides telemedicine to students and institutions of higher education at a nominal fee.

“We provide the services whether someone is insured or not,” James says. “I’m about providing health care for everyone, whether they can afford it or not.”

Her life is very much centered on giving back and trying to “make being humane cool again,” she says. It is that perspective on life, perhaps, that led her to wed a like-minded individual earlier this year.

James and her wife, Rachel Bell (a General Sessions Court judge in Nashville),



married in February after “living parallel lives” for 20 years but not officially meeting until 2015.

“We’re just two young, black women who would do anything for our community,” James says. “We want to empower people, especially young girls, the underprivileged and those living in rural areas. That is my life’s passion.”

**“I should have been one of those statistics, but by the grace of God, and thanks to my mom giving me books, I’m not... I’m just sitting back in amazement. I mean, this is little, ol’ Dorsha doing all this.”**

– Dr. Dorsha James

James and Bell have a 501(c)3, the Ring the Bell Foundation, that focuses on literacy for elementary age children, mentoring high school students and providing direction for adults looking to further their education. The women also started a web series, “The Judge Rachel and Dr. Dorsha Show,” that delves into important topics that impact their community. Discussions center on everything from overcoming obstacles related to the American Disabilities Act to addressing LGBTQ issues.

James also serves as chairman of the board of directors for her sister’s nonprofit organization, The FIND Design (Families in Need of Direction), and plans to provide scholarship funds annually for a rising fourth-year Quillen medical student to use toward the expenses related to interviewing for a residency position.

On top of everything else, James says she enjoys teaching whenever and wherever she has an opportunity to do so, including

making visits to low-income neighborhoods to talk with the youth there.

“I just like educating people because that is what got me out of the situation I was in,” she says. “That is what ultimately allowed me to travel and see all the things that I read about in books all those years ago. Because I got an education, at age 30, I was standing on a sand dune in Dubai, something I read about in a book when I was a kid.”

Through it all, James has remained grounded in family and faith. She struggles with people calling her “doctor” because, she says, “I’m just Dorsha.” But she recognizes that the title has afforded her many opportunities and opened many doors for her to successfully pursue her passion of giving back.

“I’m just sitting back in amazement,” she says. “I mean, this is little, ol’ Dorsha doing all this.”



# Toward Serving the Underserved

Quillen Alum Dr. Alyssa Pfister Now Calls Africa 'Home'

Dr. Alyssa Pfister, Class of 2005, knew when she came to Quillen for medical school that she wanted to establish a career in which she could serve the underserved.

“That was one of the things that drew me to Quillen – knowing the school was excelling at reaching unreached areas and at training doctors in primary care fields,” says Pfister, who went through the rural primary care track at Quillen. “As a student, I was in Mountain City and those experiences were very helpful in training me and giving me independence early on.”

Through the rural track, Pfister also spent two months in Kenya before completing her pediatrics and internal medicine residency in Birmingham, Alabama. In 2009, after her residency, Pfister returned to Kenya for two years to work at a hospital there, an experience she lovingly calls her “international fellowship.”

“Even though there were limited resources and I was seeing patients die,

I really enjoyed the work and it affirmed that God had given me a passion to serve others and to teach,” she says. “Our team really developed a vision for medical education in the underserved setting, for training competent and compassionate physicians who will really transform their communities.”

Pfister and her colleagues set their sights on an even more underserved area – Burundi, a country in sub-Saharan Africa that is often referred to as the hungriest and poorest country in the world. Sandwiched between Congo and Tanzania, it is a country of 12 million people with just three doctors per 100,000 Burundians.

“That is one of the lowest ratios in the world. That’s why education is a huge part of what myself and my team are doing over there,” Pfister says. “We’re training Burundian doctors and other African physicians from the region because they’re going to be the ones to really make a difference. African students who

understand the culture and language so much better than us will always do much more than we ever could.”

After first spending a year in France to learn to speak French (Burundi is a French-speaking country) and studying tropical medicine, Pfister and five colleagues arrived in Burundi in 2013. For the past four years, Pfister has served alongside her team – now three times its original size – as the director of pediatrics at Kibuye, a rural teaching hospital for Hope Africa University.

“We are the only center that has a pediatrician outside of the capital city and we are about three hours from the capital so any complicated patient is going to come to us,” Pfister says. “The most common diseases we see are malaria and then malnutrition. Often times, those two are combined. We also see sickle cell disease, meningitis, pneumonia, bronchiolitis and a lot of pre-term babies.”



In addition to treating patients, Pfister and her colleagues train African medical students who, she hopes, will transform their nation through the education they receive not only throughout medical school but after as well.

getting surgeries done, all of that is made complicated by the challenges with power. And when we don't have power, the pump can't get water from the well either so we end up with water limitations, too."



"Right now there are no residency programs in Burundi, so if a doctor finishes medical school and wants to go on for more training, he or she has to go elsewhere. And most of the time, if they go elsewhere, they are not going to come back to Burundi," Pfister says. "But when we bring specialist doctors to Burundi to do training programs, then the new doctors are trained using the resources available to them in a setting they are familiar with and can really do a lot of good."

Still, she says, it is amazing how much can be done for patients with so little. Pfister and her team have developed a 20-year master plan for the hospital in hopes of improving infrastructure to some degree.



Resources available to them are extremely limited.

"The hardest thing for me is when patients die from what I see as a preventable illness even in Burundi. I recently had one of my favorite little patients with sickle cell disease die. He was four years old and I'd been treating him for several years," Pfister says. "He was taking all of his medications he needed to help prevent illnesses and infections but he came in with acute chest syndrome, which happens with sickle cell. He really just needed two, three days with oxygen, antibiotics and fluids, and then he was going to be on his way. But that night, the power went out again and he died because he wasn't getting the oxygen he needed."

"We may have one medication for a given illness versus the 10 or 12 you'd have in the United States. For our incubators for our tiny preemies, we've had to make them ourselves with wood and Plexiglas, lightbulbs and other local materials," Pfister explains. "We have huge infrastructure challenges as well. We have as little as two hours of grid power a day so keeping babies warm, keeping oxygen concentrators running, getting lab results,

"Those are the hard cases, the ones where you know just a little bit of infrastructure would have made a difference."



**"He really just needed two, three days with oxygen, antibiotics and fluids, and then he was going to be on his way. But that night, the power went out again and he died because he wasn't getting the oxygen he needed."**

*- Dr. Alyssa Pfister*

Despite witnessing such disparities, or perhaps because of them, Pfister says she is thankful to get to do this kind of work.

"I really enjoy my work. It is meaningful and fulfilling," she says. "I get to see lightbulbs go off in students as they catch on to a concept for the first time. I see kids who are at death's door from malaria or meningitis recover within a day or two, running around the room, happy and playing with a future ahead of them."

# Alumni Footprints

## 1993

The International Association of Health-Care Professionals welcomed **Dr. Joe Hall** (Class of 1993) to their prestigious organizations with his publication in *The Leading Physicians of the World*. Hall is a family practitioner currently serving patients within Hall Medical Clinic in Waynesboro, Tennessee.

## 1995



**Dr. Linda Latimer** (Class of 1995) has been named to the ETSU Board of Trustees. The board aims to help facilitate the movement and growth of the institution in the competitive landscape of higher education.

## 1996



**Dr. James Ellzy** (Class of 1996) was named president of the Uniformed Services Academy of Family Physicians. A member of the U.S. Navy, Ellzy currently works as the deputy program executive officer for Defense Health Management Systems. He is board certified in family medicine. The USAFP provides services to enhance the experience of current and future uniformed family physicians.

## 1997

**Dr. Jaime Ponce** (Res. 1997), who completed his internship and residency in general surgery at Quillen, joined CHI Memorial Medical Group in Chattanooga.

## 2000



**Dr. David Linville** (Class of 2000) has been named Associate Vice President for Health Affairs at East Tennessee State University as well as inaugural Secretary of the Board of Trustees for ETSU.

Former pediatrics resident **Dr. Neil Treece** (Res. 2000) took over the Children's Clinic in Cody, Wyoming.

## 2003

**Dr. Lauren Chiles** (Class of 2003) received "40 under 40" honors from the *Greater Knoxville Business Journal* and was featured in the January 2017 issue. Chiles is a pathologist at Innovative Pathology Services in Knoxville.

**Dr. Ryan Stanton** (Class of 2003) spoke at the 11th annual Intermountain Brain Injury Conference presented by ETSU's Office of Professional Development. He works as an emergency room physician.

## 2004

**Dr. Omar Aljitawi**, (Res. 2004) who completed his residency in internal medicine at ETSU, was named to the Marquis Who's Who. Aljitawi currently cares for patients and conducts research through the University of Rochester (NY).

**Dr. Bert "B.J." Smith** (Class of 2004) was named to the Mountain States board of directors. Smith received both his bachelor's degree and his medical degree from ETSU.

**Dr. Shawn Southwick** (Res. 2004), who completed his family medicine internship and residency at Quillen, was named the medical director of the Emergency Department at Labette Health in Kansas.

## 2005

Kingsport Primary Care welcomed **Dr. Scott McLain** (Res. 2005).

## 2006

**Dr. Brooke Foulk** (Class of 2006, Res. 2010) received "40 under 40" honors from the *Greater Knoxville Business Journal* and was featured in the January 2017 issue. Foulk is an OB/GYN at Fort Sanders Women's Specialists.

## 2008

**Dr. Amanda Dove** (Class of 2008) joined HMG Primary Care in Kingsport.

## 2011

**Dr. Collin Bills** (Class of 2011) returned to his hometown to join the medical practice of his father in Tullahoma, Tennessee. He specializes in sports medicine.

**Dr. Brett Kindel** (Class of 2011) is practicing primary care sports medicine at Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine in Florida.

**Dr. Brian Wetherington** (Class of 2011), an interventional pain management physician, joined Blount County's Blount Memorial Hospital's medical staff.

## 2012

**Dr. Tejas Raiyani** (Res. 2012) serves as the primary physician at a new practice, Redmond Medical Group, in Georgia.

## 2013

Former resident **Dr. Mai M. Shehata** (Res. 2013) joined the International Association of HealthCare Professionals. She works in Davenport, Iowa.

**Dr. Patricia McPherson** (Res. 2013) has joined the staff at Banner Health as a surgeon in northern Colorado.

## 2014

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CHI Memorial Medical Group welcomed **Dr. Jacqueline Gentry** (Class of 2014) to CHI Memorial Internal Medicine Associates in Chattanooga.

**Dr. Mohammad Al Madani** (Res. 2014) and **Dr. Ola Khraisha** (Res. 2014) joined King's Daughters Medical Center in Ashland, Kentucky. Madani, a cardiologist, and Khraisha, an electrophysiologist, completed their internal medicine residencies and cardiology fellowships through Quillen.

## 2015

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North Colorado Family Residency Program resident physician **Michael Bradfield** (Class of 2015) received the American Academy of Family Physicians Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education at the 2017 AAFP Family Medicine Experience in San Antonio. He is one of 12 selected from a pool of 3,500 resident physicians to receive the award, which recognizes family medicine resident physicians for their leadership, community involvement and patient care and interpersonal relationships.

## 2017

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**Dr. Bhavesh Barad** (Res. 2017), who completed his internal medicine residency and a fellowship in cardiovascular medicine at Quillen, joined Byrd Regional Hospital in Louisiana.

The International Association of HealthCare Professionals welcomed **Dr. Nikunj Kumar Modi** (Res. 2017) to the prestigious organization. Dr. Modi completed his general psychiatry residency at Quillen.



## Maloney Receives BRAVA Award, recognized as Outstanding Woman Achiever

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Quillen alum Dr. Romelle Maloney (Class of 1986) was among 11 women to be honored with a BRAVA Award from the YWCA in Greenwich, Connecticut. The award recognizes outstanding women achievers who have excelled in their professional careers and who also volunteer their time and talent to help others.

Since becoming an OB/GYN specialist over 25 years ago, Maloney has practiced medicine with the goal of empowering women. This means going beyond just providing quality care to all patients. "Women are the gatekeepers of the family," she says. "Educating women about their health is very important to me."

Dr. Maloney currently is senior attending of OB/GYN specialists at Northeast Medical Group, part of the Yale New Haven Health System. She is a staff physician at Greenwich Hospital. After graduating from Quillen, Maloney completed her OB/GYN residency at New York Medical College. She has been listed by Castle Connolly as a Top Physician in New York. She received the Fairfield County Doctor of Distinction Female Trailblazer Award in 2016.

## Quillen Alum Returns Home, Discusses Role in Saving Lives After Pulse Nightclub Massacre



Dr. Joseph Ibrahim, a member of the Quillen Class of 2003 and currently the trauma medical director at Orlando Health in Florida, visited ETSU this past spring to speak with medical students.

Ibrahim talked about his experiences as part of the team that treated more than 40 patients who were rushed to the hospital following the shooting at Pulse nightclub in June 2016. Some 49 people died in the incident and dozens more were injured. Ibrahim discussed the importance of being prepared.

“Everybody has to be prepared, not just in the big metropolitan areas,” he said. “You have to have a disaster plan and you have to practice that plan.”

Ibrahim, who also received his undergraduate degree from ETSU, reminded the medical students to “be proud of where you come from” and emphasized that they can go anywhere after graduating from Quillen.

“I started right here on this very campus. I worked in a lab across the street. I grew up in Elizabethton,” he said. “Given the opportunities they have before them, they can take that and go anywhere they want in life. Truth be told, I wasn’t the No. 1 student in class. I did well, but I wasn’t No. 1. I just worked hard, had great teachers, had great support and I’ve been blessed to be where I’m at now.”



## Quillen Alum Offers Keynote Address

Col. Jeffrey Morgan, a Quillen alum, spoke at the 2016 Veterans Day ceremony on the ETSU campus. Morgan discussed the rich military history of this region, and also emphasized the great doctors and ideas coming out of the Quillen College of Medicine.

Morgan is also a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Duke University. As a medical officer, Morgan has served in various capacities at the Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, North Carolina; chief of the Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation at Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood, Texas; and Diving Medical Officer with the Special Forces Underwater Operations School in Key West, Florida.

A native of Asheboro, North Carolina, Morgan’s overseas postings include Heidelberg, Germany, and the 101st Airborne Division during Operation Desert Storm.

## Three Quillen Alums Named Chief Residents

On July 1, each of these three Quillen alums took over as the chief resident of their respective divisions at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. They happened to all be working at the same time one night and snapped this photo. From left to right are Drs. Jeremiah Gaddy (Class of 2015, Emergency Medicine); Haley Kilmecki (Class of 2014, Pediatrics) and Mark Hoffman (Class of 2014, Neurology).





## Dr. Robert Elder Follows New Career Path

Dr. Robert Elder (Class of 1984), now a professor and medical director of Women and Infants at The University of Tennessee Medical Center and The University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine, was featured in the Fall/Winter 2016 issue of the UT medical school's alumni publication called *Frontiers*.

The article shared Elder's unique journey to his career, through which he has spent the last 24 years as an obstetrician-gynecologist, most recently specializing in gynecology. After joining the Air Force to become a medic, Elder tested too high on assessments and instead wound up working in Air Force Intelligence. Following his military stint, Elder earned his pharmacy degree but ultimately felt called to attend ETSU's Quillen College of Medicine where he eventually found a passion for obstetrics and gynecology.

Elder joined the UT Medical Center shortly after completing his residency in Memphis. The article credits Elder with performing the hospital's first laparoscopic hysterectomy in the early 1990s. He began focusing more on gynecology and laparoscopic procedures in 2012 and, today, sees not only the patients he delivered, but some of their children as well.

To read the *Frontiers* article in its entirety, visit [www.utmedicalcenter.org/publications/frontiers](http://www.utmedicalcenter.org/publications/frontiers).

*Photo Courtesy of The University of Tennessee Medical Center*

## Skalko Leaves Legacy Gift



Dr. Richard Skalko and Pat Skalko Nicely at graduation in May 2012

Dr. Richard G. Skalko was born in Providence, Rhode Island. He received his bachelor's degree in biology from Providence College (RI), his master's degree from St. John's University (NY) and his PhD in human anatomy from the University of Florida.

Skalko began his career at Cornell University Medical College. In 1977, he arrived in Johnson City to serve as the inaugural chairman of the Department of Anatomy in the not-yet-opened (or named) East Tennessee State University School of Medicine. For the next 35 years, Skalko used his expertise to establish effective teaching, staffing, research and facilities requirements for the new college.

In addition to his departmental leadership and teaching responsibilities, Dr. Skalko continued his empirical research to determine the previously unknown physiological and chemical mechanisms that caused birth defects and other anomalies. His philosophy of discussing hypotheses, exchanging information and comparing results with other researchers contributed to the international respect he achieved in his field.

Giving freely of his time and expertise was also an inspiration to the graduate students he mentored, medical students he taught and colleagues with whom he worked. Under his direction, the focus of the department was expanded to become the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology in 1994. Skalko's Curriculum Vitae documents the nearly 200 varied activities, publications, presentations, abstracts, awards and honors he amassed in his 50-year career, including long-term recognition in *Who's Who in America*.

Upon his retirement in May 2012 and as an acknowledgment of Skalko's contribution to the establishment of the college and his dedication to teaching and research, the Quillen College of Medicine established the Richard G. Skalko Scholarship in his honor. Skalko died on May 28, 2017, and left a lasting legacy to the college and its students with an estate gift to the scholarship endowment.

"He was the grateful and gracious recipient of both athletic and academic scholarships for his post-high school education," noted Skalko's daughter, Peggy Skalko Shepard. "Donating to this scholarship, both while he was alive, and via his estate by his direction, was his way of saying thank you."

All three of Skalko's daughters, including Chris Skalko, recently attended the Quillen College of Medicine Scholarship Appreciation Dinner in honor of their father's gift.

# 2017 Quillen Reunion Weekend

On July 28- 29, the Classes of 1987 and 2007 held their 30th and 10th reunions, respectively. Each class had an informal get-together on Friday evening with the Class of 1987 meeting for dinner at The Peerless and the Class of 2007 gathering at Jack's City Grill. Saturday included tours of Stanton-Gerber Hall, where attendees visited the anatomy lab and the Center for Experiential Learning while observing demonstrations of the latest techniques in medical student education. Families gathered at Warriors Path State Park later in the day and had lunch at the Firehouse restaurant in Johnson City.

Both classes attended a dinner on Saturday evening in the Grand Soldiers Ballroom at the Carnegie Hotel. Attendees were welcomed by Dr. Kyle Colvett, Alumni Society president, and received updates from Dean Robert T. Means Jr., Dr. Ken Olive, Dr. Tom Kwasigroch and Doug Taylor. Second-year medical student and President of the Organization of Student Representatives Ansley Ricker spoke from the perspective of today's students.

"Reunion events like this would not be successful without the assistance of class agent volunteers who help plan events and contact classmates to encourage them to attend," said Carol Sloan, director of development and alumni relations for the college. Evelyne Davidson served the Class of 1987 as class agent and Suzanne Benton and Brian Smith planned activities for the Class of 2007. Save the Date postcards have already been mailed for the 2018 Reunion Weekend on July 27- 28, 2018. Those interested in serving as a class agent should contact Sloan at [sloanc@etsu.edu](mailto:sloanc@etsu.edu).



**Standing in back, left to right:** Richard Flynn, Kelly Lish **Front row, left to right:** Barry Bingham, Doug Strickland, Stephanie McClure, Evelyne Davidson, John Fenley, Ranota Thomas



**Standing in back, left to right:** Jonathan Hughes, Wayne Smith, Jonathan Pewett, John Hoskins, Jason Jones **Front row, left to right:** Carlenda Smith, Shefali Paranjape, Suzanne Benton, Maggie Hayes, Connie Stoots, Nora Phillips

## Special Thanks!

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Each year we call on our Quillen alumni to support two important fundraising efforts to benefit our medical students. In the spring and summer, we send out an appeal for the White Coat campaign to provide funds for the first-year students' white coats, the white coat reception and other student activities throughout the year. We are very grateful for the 136 alums who contributed more than \$24,000. The medical students call alumni for the annual Quillen phonathon in the fall. This fall 71 alums answered the call and contributed nearly \$27,000 for the college of medicine scholarship endowment fund. Thank you to our alums who make a difference here at Quillen!



Second-year medical student, Taylor Cox and Dr. Tom Kwasigroch at Phonathon on August 28, 2017.

## Alumni Society Board Revamping

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On Saturday, October 28, 2017, the Board of the Quillen Alumni Society met to revise the Constitution and By-laws of the organization. The nominating and awards committee will be looking for alums who are interested in serving as a member of the Board and they will also be taking nominations for the re-instituted Outstanding Alumni to be awarded at the annual meeting in July. If you are interested or would like to nominate someone, please contact us at [qcomalumnisociety@etsu.edu](mailto:qcomalumnisociety@etsu.edu) and let us know. We will be sending out more complete information and nomination forms by mail and email in January.

## GET READY FACEBOOK! Here we come...

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We're excited to announce that the Quillen College of Medicine Alumni Society will launch its very own Facebook page on December 1, 2017.

Follow our page to receive regular updates and event notifications from the QCOM Alumni Society on your news feed!

Send us your Class Notes, Stories, and Photos to Share to [QcomAlumniSociety@etsu.edu](mailto:QcomAlumniSociety@etsu.edu) or contact Carol Sloan, Director of Development and Alumni Relations at 423-439-6142.



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East Tennessee State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, telephone 404-679-4500, or <http://www.sacscoc.org>, for questions about the accreditation of East Tennessee State University.



QUILLEN  
COLLEGE *of* MEDICINE  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 70721  
Johnson City, TN 37614-1710



# SAVE THE DATE!

**QUILLEN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
ALUMNI REUNION  
JULY 27 – 28, 2018  
CLASSES OF 1988, 1998, AND 2008**

If you would like information about being a class agent for your class, please contact us: [QcomAlumniSociety@etsu.edu](mailto:QcomAlumniSociety@etsu.edu) or 423-439-6316

## Quillen Calendar

**Match Day** – March 16, 2018

**Graduation** – May 4, 2018

**White Coat Ceremony  
and Reception** – July 20, 2018

## Regional Alumni Events

### Chattanooga, TN

Tuesday, March 13, 2018 • 7:00 p.m.  
The Chattanooga Hotel

### Knoxville, TN

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 • 7:00 p.m.  
Cherokee Country Club

### Memphis, TN

Monday, June 4, 2018 • 7:00 p.m.  
Owen Brennan's

### Nashville, TN

Tuesday, June 5, 2018 • 7:00 p.m.  
Franklin Marriott Cool Springs