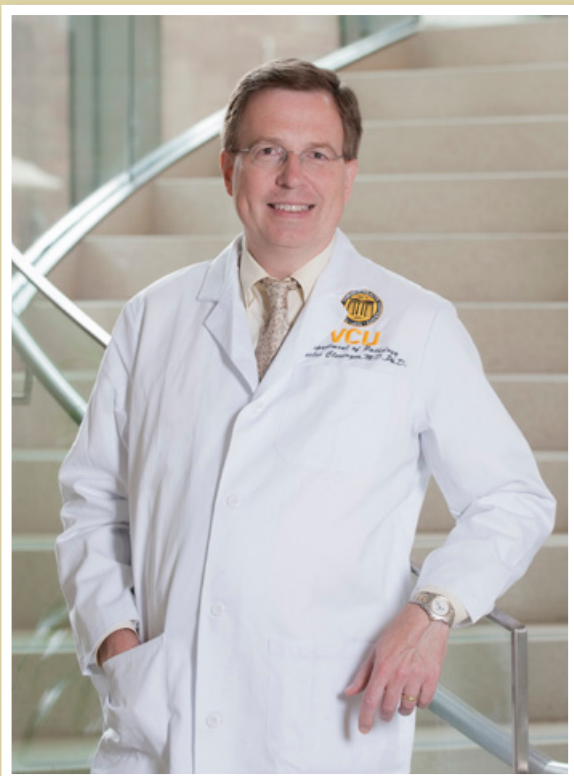


by Jennifer C. Usher



Charles (Chuck) V. Clevenger, M.D., Ph.D.

*Chair of the Department of Pathology and the Carolyn Wingate Hyde Endowed Chair of Cancer Research**

LAST POST: NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY FEINBERG SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

A pathologist who specializes in breast cancer, Charles V. Clevenger, M.D., Ph.D., was drawn to take the post as chair of the Department of Pathology because of its tradition of clinical excellence. "It was attractive to me that it's already an outstanding clinical department that has strong leadership across the board, so I can focus on building up other areas like research, translation and outreach," he says.

Joining the medical school also gave Clevenger the opportunity to reunite with a valued colleague: Dean of Medicine Jerry Strauss III, M.D., Ph.D. "He was an informal mentor to me back when we were both on the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine," Clevenger says. "I developed a high level of trust and respect for him there, and we kept in touch over the years."

Prior to arriving on the MCV Campus in August, Clevenger was the Diana, Princess of Wales Professor of Cancer Research in the Department of Pathology at Northwestern University. There he led an NIH-funded translational research program on women's cancer and was the co-leader of the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Research Laboratories.

His research focuses on prolactin, a hormone that stimulates breast development and milk production in women and can also stimulate the growth of breast cancer. Clevenger led his research team in making key discoveries about prolactin's role in the growth and spread of breast cancer.

Now he is developing novel therapies aimed at blocking either the release or the function of prolactin to stop it from promoting growth and metastasis. These therapies include repurposing well-known drugs, such as Cabergoline and Cyclosporine A, both of which are now being examined in phase I and II trials in patients with breast cancer.

In addition to continuing these investigations and recruiting students and postdocs to join his lab, Clevenger says he hopes to help expand the ongoing basic research efforts in the Department of Pathology with an emphasis on cancer biology. "I'm looking forward to building both the department and my lab and collaborating with the faculty, staff and students," he says.

Currently, Clevenger serves as a member of the editorial board for *Breast Disease*, and in 2003 he received the Pfizer Outstanding Investigator Award from the American Society for Investigative Pathology.



Charles (Chuck) E. Geyer, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.P.

*Associate Director of Clinical Research at the Massey Cancer Center, Professor in the Division of Hematology, Oncology and Palliative Care in the Department of Internal Medicine and the Harrigan, Haw, Luck Families Chair in Cancer Research**

LAST POST: THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER AND THE STATEWIDE CLINICAL TRIALS NETWORK OF TEXAS

In his role as associate director for clinical research at the Massey Cancer Center, Charles E. Geyer, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.P., oversees the development of oncology clinical trials. It's a role he is uniquely suited for because of his expertise in designing and conducting clinical research studies.

Most recently, he was the president and chief medical officer of the CTNet, a research collaboration of academic and community-based cancer centers across Texas. Prior to that, he oversaw development and conduct of clinical studies as the director of medical affairs at the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project in Pittsburgh. In addition, he was the founding co-chairman of the National Cancer Institute's Breast Cancer Steering Committee, which reviews and prioritizes phase 3 and large phase 2 research trials.

Now Geyer will direct his attention to expanding Massey's participation in multi-center trials launched by groups like the NSABP. He'll also develop infrastructure to support Massey researchers in rapidly translating their own laboratory discoveries into new clinical trials. "We'll be collaborating more with community oncologists because we want to take the promising discoveries of VCU scientists and offer them quickly to patients across the state through

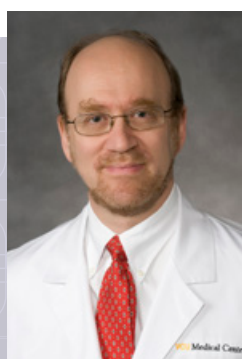
a vibrant clinical trials network," he explains. "I'm excited by the strong commitment at Massey and the VCU School of Medicine to enhancing and expanding the clinical research program."

Geyer's own research focuses on treatments for HER2-positive breast cancer. In women with this cancer, a genetic mutation causes breast cancer cells to make too much of a protein called human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2) that causes the cancer cells grow and divide faster.

Geyer has led studies that paved the way for the FDA's approval of drugs that block the effects of the HER2 protein. He served as co-lead investigator on the pivotal Tykerb trial and was a lead investigator in the landmark clinical trial that showed the breakthrough drug Herceptin added to chemotherapy was more effective than standard chemotherapy alone in early stage HER2-positive breast cancer.

Geyer currently is co-chair of the scientific steering committee for a new global trial looking at using the recently approved drug for resistant HER2 positive metastatic breast cancer, Kadcyla, as an alternative to Herceptin in women with resistant HER2-positive early stage breast cancer.

*expected academic investiture in fall 2013



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continued from cover...

Among the dozen projects recently funded by the AHA is one led by Antonio Abbate, M.D., Ph.D. The assistant professor of internal medicine studies drugs that prevent damage that occurs to the heart over time following a heart attack. He recently published results in the *American Journal of Cardiology* from studies of the anti-inflammatory drug anakinra.

"In these pilot studies, we found that anakinra quenched the inflammation in the heart during acute myocardial infarction and appears to prevent heart failure," said Abbate.

Research in the Pauley Heart Center is bolstered by a recent renovation to its research laboratories. Funded in part by a \$5-million NIH grant, the renovation includes a 3,000-square-foot expansion that's been outfitted with a cold room for experiments requiring frigid conditions and a dark room to track fluorescent proteins.



ABBATE

The Pauley Heart Center Campaign

The ongoing \$20-million campaign will support recruiting a scientific director and five new research faculty members, along with start-up funds for lab research staff and equipment. The campaign goals are built around the need for new research programs in disease prevention, women's cardiovascular health and congenital heart disease. In addition, funds will be targeted to accelerate existing nationally acclaimed programs in cardio-protection research, ARCTIC resuscitation for cardiac arrest and artificial devices such as Total Artificial Hearts.

Up to \$5 million from the Glasgow Endowment is available to match eligible gifts of at least \$500,000. For more information, contact Lauren Moore, senior development officer, at (804) 828-4100 or lzmoore@mcvh-vcu.edu.