


De Biase, I., Clark, R., Al-Mahdawi, S., Monticelli, A., Cocozza, S., Pook, M., and Bidichandani, S. “Somatic instability of expanded triplet repeats occurs after organogenesis and is tissue and age dependent” Annual Meeting American Society of Human Genetics, Salt Lake City, UT, October 25-29, 2005.


Floyd, R., Towner, R., Guo, W-X., Hensley, K., Broyles, R., and Kotake, Y. “Role of Nitric Oxide in Hepatocellular Carcinoma Development” 12th Annual Meeting Society Free Radical Biology & Medicine, Austin, TX, Nov. 16-21, 2005.


Bidichandani, S., De Biase, I., Clark, R., Al-Mahdawi, S., Monticelli, A., Cocozza, S., and Pook, M. “Age-dependent and tissue-specific somatic instability in Friedreich ataxia” World Congress of Neurology, Gold Coast, Australia, November 3-4, 2005.


Broyles, R. “Gene Regulatory Protein Therapy Using Ferritin Heavy Chain: Towards a Phenotypic Cure for Sickle Cell Disease.” Hematology/Oncology Section, Department of Pediatrics, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, OK, Feb. 3, 2006.


Weigel, P. “Hyaluronan homeostasis in health and disease: HA synthases versus HARE, the HA Receptor for Endocytosis” University of Nebraska-Lincoln Biochemistry Seminar Series, Center for Biological Chemistry and Redox Biology, Lincoln, NE, Dec. 13, 2005.
Gillian Air, MD, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow in the Bidichandani Lab. Fellowship National Ataxia Foundation, "Somatic instability in Friedreich ataxia” 01/01/06 – 12/31/06.

Adam Zlotnick, National Institutes of Health, “Molecular Modulation of Hepatitis B Virus Assembly” 12/1/05 – 11/30/10.


Sanjay I. Bidichandani was awarded the “UK Ataxia Panos Ioannou Memorial Prize” for the best oral presentation at Ataxia 2005. World Congress of Neurology, Gold Coast, Australia, November 3-4, 2005

Paul H. Weigel was elected President-Elect of the Biochemistry Chairs group (AMGDB) at the January meeting in Mexico. Seventy-five Chairs from around the country and Puerto Rico attended the 2006 meeting of the Association of Medical and Graduate Departments of Biochemistry, which was founded in 1970 and is open to US Chairs of Biochemistry Departments with Graduate or Medical education programs. Dr. Weigel, who was also the first webmaster of the organization (2002-2006) will be President in 2007.

Robert Broyles chaired a session titled “Ferritin (mitochondrial, nuclear, and otherwise); Iron Imaging; and Iron Chelators and Siderophores” at the East coast Iron Club meeting, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, Nov. 4, 2005.

Dr. Cummings’ research was highlighted in an op-ed piece our Provost, Dr. Joseph Ferretti, in the November 20, 2005 edition of the Daily Oklahoman. The article discussed the importance of bioscience research to the future health and economic prosperity of Oklahoma as outlined in the recent Battelle study by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and described the University’s new five-year strategic research plan to guide growth of the research enterprise at the Health Sciences Center. Dr. Cummings was cited as one of the University’s top scientists, whose research in glycobiology impacts the study of cell communication, gene expression, immunology, inflammation and the growth of viruses, bacteria and other parasites that create illness.

Rhonda Clark
BMB Graduate Travel Award
Spring 2006

Laura Pollard
COM-GSA Graduate Travel Award
Fall 2005
BMB Graduate Travel Award
Spring 2006

Mandy Peak
2006 Recipient of the Fred and Marie Gray Research Achievement Award
Dr. John “Jack” Sokatch suddenly passed away on February 6, 2006. He had a long and distinguished career as a faculty member, researcher, and administrator at the OUHSC and served as Chair of the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology for eight years at a key juncture in the transition of the department from classical biochemistry to molecular and cellular biochemistry. Not only did he earn widespread respect for his accomplishments as a scientist, but he also was revered for the generosity of his mentoring and friendships.

His memory and legacy lives on through the Johnson-Sokatch Endowed Lecture. Dr. Sokatch believed in the furthering of science but also in serving the community through research. The Johnson-Sokatch Lecture does exactly that by annually honoring two distinguished past chairs of the Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Department, one being the beloved Jack Sokatch.

We pay tribute to his dedication and commitment to the work he inspired and mentored through many colleagues, students, and staff. His interest and vision in developing and improving the learning environment expanded past the BMB affording him opportunity to use his leadership and creativity on the planning committee that designed and constructed the BMSB which currently houses all the basic science departments for OUHSC College of Medicine. Even beyond retirement Dr. Sokatch continued to encourage with passion, greatness in those he met or knew and challenged us to always be the best we could be at whatever we were doing.

It is with much enthusiasm that we carry on his memory and salute the accomplishments he brought to our department.
The faculty representing the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology on Thursday, January 26th, at the 20th Evening of Excellence were Drs. Air, Bidichandani, DeAngelis, Olson, Unger, and West. This was the largest number of BMB faculty members ever to attend an Evening of Excellence event, which is sponsored by the OU College of Medicine Alumni Association. They were invited to participate in recognition of their multiple contributions and achievements in 2005 in their service to the Department, professional activities or research programs. The following are a few select examples: Dr. Bidichandani has been recommended for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure in 2006; Dr. Air has provided strong leadership as the director of BMB Graduate Programs; Dr. DeAngelis has been proposed and recommended for promotion to Professor in 2006; Dr. Olson has achieved international recognition for her research program and became a permanent NIH study section member; Dr. Unger excelled (once again) as Director of our MS1 Medical Biochemistry & Medical Molecular Genetics course; Dr West directed and greatly improved the Department’s Biochemistry course for Pharmacy & Dental students, and he also became a permanent NIH study section member. I could list many more accomplishments for these outstanding faculty, and they are all deserving of more recognition and congratulations. On behalf of all the staff, students, fellows and faculty in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, I want to congratulate each of them for their many successes and thank them for their dedication and hard work to help the Department. (Paul Weigel)
Dr. Ali Shilatifard, formerly associated with our Department as a graduate student with Dr. Richard Cummings and a post-doctoral fellow with Dr. Joan Conaway, was recently selected to receive the ASBMB-Amgen Award from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology “for significant achievements in the application of biochemistry and molecular biology to the understanding of disease”. The award will be presented and the award lecture delivered at the 2006 ASBMB Annual Meeting and Centennial Celebration, April 1-5 in San Francisco. Dr. Shilatifard is currently a professor in the Department of Chemistry at St. Louis University.
The 1st Annual Chili Cook Off was a huge success with 16 entries representing 5 ethnic cultures. It was an educational and enlightening experience enjoyed by almost the whole department. Special thank you to the Pediatric IS department for providing the judging this year. Competition was stiff. Congratulations to our winners:

Hottest: 1st - Robert Hurst
          & 2nd - Anita Bennett

Family Style: 1st - Paula Reed
              & 2nd - Barbara Moore

Most Unusual: 1st - Upma Gulati
              & 2nd - Zhimin Liang

The judges - Pediatric IS