When Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science was established in 1966, it was founded upon the following mission, “To conduct medical education and research in the context of service to a defined population so as to train persons to provide care with excellence and compassion to this and other underserved populations.” In the university’s 47 year history, the mission statement has undergone changes to reflect the importance of all academic programs, “To conduct education, research and clinical services in the context of community engagement to train health professionals who promote wellness, provide care with excellence and compassion, and transform the health of underserved communities.” While the wording may have changed, the values, principles and vision it was founded upon have not.

CDU has an established record of producing health professionals who are committed to excellence in patient care, research and community service. The University is proud of its record of increasing access to health professional careers for students who might otherwise not have had the opportunity to fulfill their dream of becoming a medical professional. The University is a source for health and science professionals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds who are committed to providing quality health care to the medically underserved and economically disadvantaged. Today, CDU remains a beacon of hope, a symbol of possibilities, and a model of progress, locally, nationally and internationally.

Thank you for your continued support and for representing CDU with pride!
Have a healthy and prosperous 2013!

Alumni Honors

“Celebrating our past and sustaining our future” was the theme of the recent CDU Alumni Legacy Reception. Welcoming old friends and classmates, the Office of the President and Office of Strategic Advancement played host as its members gathered to honor three distinguished alumni for their professional achievements.

“Tonight we come together to spotlight three individuals who personify the mission of the University, by making important contributions in the field of medicine, the community and to CDU as well,” said President and CEO of CDU, David M. Carlisle, M.D., Ph.D. This inaugural event is slated to become an annual CDU tradition, honoring alumni who have played a pivotal and integral role in furthering the CDU mission through service, training and education.

Alumnus, Dr. Artis Woodward, ‘84, commented, “There is a need for Drew alumni to recall their experience. How they were affected by those who trained us and what they have been able to achieve is a direct result of that and they should be energized to return to this institution and to give back to it in one way or another.”

“I am pleased and humbled by the award presentation,” said Dr. Davidson. “I have spent my academic career at CDU, with the intent of providing competitive training opportunities equal to any place in the country for gynecologist. We have achieved that, along with being able to provide highly skilled technical services to the community as well.” The recipient of the

Continued on next page
Alumni Honors

Alumni Achievement Award, which recognizes alumni of CDU who have attained outstanding success and national or international distinction in the health professions reflecting the CDU mission, was Ndika Fomukong, PA-C, CDU Alumnus – Class of 2004 (College of Science and Health).

“I am proud to say that I am an alumnus of CDU,” said Fomukong. “We come to Drew because of our passion to work in underserved communities. When you provide health care in an area like this, you notice just how little people have and how truly grateful they are for the service we provide. That is the true compensation; gratitude and appreciation for providing them with the services they need.”

Two Honorary Alumni, faculty members, Arthur W. Fleming, M.D., F.A.C.S. and Ezra C. Davidson, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.S., received the CDU Education Legacy Award. This award recognizes outstanding individual educators, who have an excellent reputation for producing health care professionals committed to the mission of the University.

“I am deeply honored to even be considered for award,” said Dr. Fleming. It is my hope by showcasing these types of achievements, we will help other alumni and the community to understand the history of the University and be appreciative of what impact it has on the medical community.”

Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Mylene Rucker, 76 (CoSH), ‘86 (CoM Medical Education)

Dr. Mylene Rucker has a generous spirit. When the daughter of an employee was diagnosed with leukemia, Rucker offered to host a yard sale in the parking lot of her wellness center in Visalia. This fundraiser on Nov. 15 also included a bounce house, and pizza and tacos were sold. They raised $1,500. “It was almost like a little fair,” Rucker said. “A lot of my patients are very giving.”

Four times a year, Rucker, a family practice physician, sets up a free health care screening clinic in Allensworth where she treats mostly farmworkers. She takes a staff of two to three medical assistants, and her son, Kweku Middleton, helps move equipment. They see about 15 patients each visit.

“I see myself as a community physician,” she said. “You go out and reach the community and make the world a better place to live.” Each time she visits Allensworth, it costs her $1,000. “Nobody pays me,” she said. “Not even a penny.” In Allensworth, she has diagnosed some cancers and a lot of diabetes. “Many didn’t know they had it,” she said.

“I’m a very community-oriented person,” she said. “I had a hard time myself.” She raised her son and daughter as a single mother. She left her alcoholic husband in Chicago and moved back to Los Angeles with two children and two 6-foot lockers. During an economic recession in the late 1970s, she couldn’t find work. So she took advantage of a government program that paid for her child care and purchased her uniforms while she studied to become a physician assistant at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. As a physician assistant, she worked with child-abuse

Collaborating with research faculty at CDU, COSH MPH graduate Ms. Nichole Nicholas presented research on the potential stress-reducing health benefits of compassion in a poster titled “The Development and Evaluation of a Compassion Scale.” According to Ms. Nicholas, “I had a wonderful time at the RCMI Conference and was able to network with other researchers and students within public health. I do hope that CDU can be as involved with this conference in the future because it is beneficial to develop professional growth in our students.” In addition to being an opportunity for CDU students to showcase their research and to build networks, the conference was also a good opportunity for the professional development of junior faculty by giving them an opportunity to build relationships and learn about potential funding opportunities. Urban Public Health Assistant Professor Dr. Bita Amani, who also attended the conference, expressed how inspired she felt by CDU’s well recognized role among Minority Serving Institutions. Additionally, she states, “The conference was a great opportunity to tap into the national conversation on representation, health disparities and community involvement.”

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If you would like to submit an article, information, quote or a question for the newsletter, please contact Jackie Brown, Director of Alumni Relations at (323) 563-5963 or CDUalumniassociation@cdrewu.edu.

Are You Connected?

Email us at CDUalumniassociation@cdrewu.edu

Alumni Roll Call - We need your help! CDU is actively seeking to connect with lost alumni. We want to keep you informed of your alma mater’s activities and accomplishments. We also want to provide you, with a vehicle to connect with your former classmates and friends. If you are an alumnus or know the whereabouts of other alumni, please send us an email with your name, mailing address and telephone number. Or contact Jackie Brown, Director of Alumni Relations at (323) 563-5963.
at Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital in Watts. She said she remembers her young patients crying, and she cried with them. At 32, she began medical school at Drew and became a family practice doctor. Later, she earned her master’s degree in public health from the University of California, Los Angeles.

She moved to Visalia in 1998 as a visiting doctor to be near her nephew, Jeremiah, who now lives in Fresno. Four years ago, she built the wellness center at 2305 Midvalley Ave. She cares for 2,000 patients and serves as the director of community medicine at Kaweah Delta Medical Center under Dr. Robert Allen.

Next door to her office is a community garden that she started with Sister Friends, a nonprofit organization of six women. Rucker said she works in the garden because it’s therapeutic. “It calms my nerves,” she said.

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Charles R. Drew University Alumni Association (CDUAA)—All graduates of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (including Residents from the KDMC Training Programs) are members of the CDU Alumni Association. Honorary alumni include honorary degree recipients, former faculty and supporters. Register for chapter membership (College of Medicine, College of Science and Health and Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing) at www.cdrewu.edu - Click on Alumni.

Support for the CDU Alumni Association—As a supporter of the CDU Alumni Association and its affiliate chapters you have the satisfaction of knowing your financial support is making a difference in our ability to enhance the educational experience and promote the professional advancement of CDU. Visit https://donate.cdrewu.edu/scholarships_2.asp for information on how to make a donation to the College of Medicine Alumni Association’s 1,000 x $1,000 Fund; Albert J. Saunders, Sr. College of Science and Health Scholarship Fund; Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing: Dr. Gloria J. McNeal Founding Dean Fund; and The Mrs. Lillian Harkless Mobley Presidential Endowed Scholarship Fund. Thank you in advance for your support!