Dyson College Honors Chief Medical Examiner for New York City: Dr. Charles S. Hirsch

Forensic pathology was just beginning to take shape in the early ’60s when Dr. Charles S. Hirsch, currently chief medical examiner for New York City, became interested in this medical specialty. “It’s an exceptionally gratifying way to practice medicine. On a day to day basis, we provide families with useful information that provides a lifelong source of comfort,” Dr. Hirsch reveals.

This spring, Dyson College will honor Dr. Hirsch for his outstanding contribution to New York City and to the families of the victims of Sept 11 through his leadership of the most difficult and important forensic investigation in the history of this country. He will be honored as the special guest honoree at the seventh annual Dyson Distinguished Achievement Award Benefit Reception.

Raised in Chicago and educated at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, Chicago, Dr. Hirsch became fascinated with forensic pathology during his residency in pathology at University Hospitals of Cleveland. “The hospital was very close to the coroner’s office. I would pop in there to see what was going on, and it fascinated me,” Dr. Hirsch says.

“The practice of forensic pathology is one of the most social things you can do,” Dr. Hirsch maintains.

“What we tell people can be unpleasant, but no one lives comfortably with uncertainty.”

The Medical Examiner’s Office has made history with the forensic investigations resulting from the terrorist attack of September 11 and the crash of American Airlines flight 587. His office has used new scientific techniques and data management systems in the evaluation of just under 20,000 body parts from these tragic events. “The work we do is so important to the September 11 survivors. I am challenged and energized by, and grateful for what this office has been able to do for them,” he adds.

Dr. Hirsch’s office has received help from all over the world and new approaches have been devised because of the magnitude of the investigation. “The best brains in the U.S. are participating in this ongoing investigation, including the Celera Genomics Group and Bode Technology Group,” he explains.

Dr. Hirsch concedes, “The forensic investigative work of 9/11 may never end.” His office has freeze-dried and stored evidence that so far has not been positively identified, in the hope that when new scientific techniques and technologies become available, an identification may then be made.

“We have an open door to colleges and universities. It is a critically important responsibility of this agency to get involved in teaching,” Dr. Hirsch says. Pace University’s forensic science program employs five forensic scientists who are full-time employees of Dr. Hirsch’s office. Dr. Melvyn Oremland, director of the program, says, “All of these outstanding teachers think the world of Dr. Hirsch, both as a role model for what a forensic scientist can be, as well as a director who knows his employees and maintains a warm relationship with each of them.”

Dr. Hirsch resides in New York City. He is married, and has one daughter and two grandsons. His Wheaton terrier, Zoe, is a great source of joy. His interests include photography, classical music, reading, and gardening.
The seventh annual Dyson Distinguished Achievement Awards, the College’s premier event to recognize outstanding faculty and alumni and to raise funds for scholarships, will take place the evening of April 9. It will be held in Midtown at the Sky Club, with its impressive view of the New York skyline—a fitting setting to celebrate our high aspirations and achievements. Dyson College has much to be proud of, and this is an occasion to recognize the excellence of our programs, our caring, exceptional faculty, and outstanding alumni, who have achieved highly successful careers.

This year we honor special guest awardee Dr. Charles S. Hirsch, chief medical examiner, for New York City; faculty members Dr. Ellen L. Weiser and Dr. Martha W. Driver; and alumni Dr. Everett C. Schreiber, Jr., and Mr. Carlos M. Ramos, all for noteworthy achievements in their fields.

The Dyson Alumni Board and Dyson Advisory Board host the reception. After last year’s event, a board member wrote to me: “Bravo! Last night was wonderful and genuine. I was sitting with four other board members who felt the same way. There was such good information and an aura about Dyson—its faculty and alumni. This message really needs to be spread!”

I invite you to meet the alumni honorees, reunite with the faculty, reconnect with former classmates, and help us provide scholarships for deserving students. For information on becoming a sponsor, or for ticket information, please call (212) 346-1685.

Carlos M. Ramos, ’67

“I wasn’t the best of students,” reveals Carlos Ramos, who arrived in the United States from Puerto Rico at the age of four. A surprising remark from a man who is managing director of Provident Group, an international investment bank that focuses on global corporate finance and alternative assets. “But I always did well in mathematics,” he quickly adds.

Mr. Ramos is head of Provident’s New York investment banking advisory and financial services for clients based in the U.S., the Caribbean, Mexico and South America. Mr. Ramos has extensive global experience in financial structuring, debt and equity investment, and emerging-stage company financing.

Prior to joining Provident Group, Mr. Ramos was co-head of CIT/Newcourt’s telecommunications and information technology practice for Europe and Latin America. He was assistant treasurer of AT&T International. Prior to being named assistant treasurer, Mr. Ramos held a number of executive positions in marketing, business development, finance, and corporate strategy at AT&T and Merrill Lynch.

The highlight of Mr. Ramos’ career has been his single-handed effort to get AT&T listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) in 1987. “I handled all the negotiations with the Japanese officials. At the time, there were only 15 American companies on the TSE. When I returned to the United States, my international career took off,” he says.

In response to the September 11 terrorist attacks, Mr. Ramos volunteered with the Red Cross. “I drove 12 hours a day for six days, bringing food and supplies to Ground Zero, while my office was inaccessible, and continued driving part-time when my office re-opened. I also chauffeured counselors, nurses, and other relief personnel. I wanted to contribute something to the rescue and recovery efforts,” he relates.

Mr. Ramos earned both a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and an M.B.A. with a concentration in operations research at Pace University.

His interests include skiing, scuba diving, fly-fishing, horseback riding, classical, jazz, Latin dance music, ballet, and theater, and he is an instrument-rated pilot. He and his wife Ofelia reside in New York City.

Everett C. Schreiber, Jr. Ph.D. ‘75

“I received a good foundation as a chemistry major at Pace, which has served me very well in my career.”

“I was absolutely surprised and honored when asked to accept this award,” says Everett Schreiber, senior technical writer, Varian Incorporated, a Palo Alto-based manufacturer of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) instruments, which analyze molecules.

Born and raised in Levittown, New York, Dr. Schreiber has steadily advanced his career with Varian since 1987. He has been quality assurance engineer, senior technical training specialist, senior technical support chemist, senior chemist, and senior technical writer. As senior technical writer, Dr. Schreiber composes the manuals that teach the customer how to use the instrumentation, and he provides the customer service technician instructions for installation. Prior to Varian, Dr. Schreiber was NMR spectroscopist at General Electric NMR Instruments, and assistant director of research at Muscular Dystrophy Association.

“I received a good foundation as a chemistry major at Pace, which has served me very well in my career,” adds Dr. Schreiber. And it wasn’t all work for him on campus. “I helped establish the first archery team in 1971. We won continued on p. 3
Faculty honorees

Martha Westcott Driver, Ph.D.

“I’ve always loved reading poetry and novels from a very young age,” says Dr. Martha Driver, professor of English. “And through singing medieval music in church choir and visiting the Cloisters as a teenager, I began to love the Middle Ages.”

Dr. Driver has written 30 articles and essays about medieval books and manuscripts. She has been published in, among others, Gutenberg-Jahrbuch, The Yearbook of English Studies and The Chaucer Review. Her research is on the early history of the book.

“In my 21 years here, Pace has been very supportive of my work,” Dr. Driver explains. She is a co-founder, with Sally Horrall, of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History, which has a 465-person membership worldwide. “It’s for amateurs and scholars – anyone who has an interest in early books and manuscripts.”

She has received numerous honors and awards, including, among others, a National Science Foundation grant (2001-2003) in support of the development of technology in the humanities, four National Endowment for the Humanities grants, and an American Council of Learned Societies grant.

“I felt very honored and touched by this award,” Dr. Driver notes. “I am constantly impressed with the level of enthusiasm and motivation of Pace students – they’re the reason that I’m here. It’s a pleasure to work with them.”

Born and raised in Manhattan, Dr. Driver holds an A.B. from Vassar College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. She is a member of the Association Internationale de Bibliophile, The Early Book Society, and The Medieval Academy of America, among other organizations.

Dr. Driver and her husband, Tom Rhodes, reside in Manhattan. She is active in her church, acting as lay reader and vestry member. Her interests include folk, swing, Latin, and 18th-century English formal dancing, and horseback riding.

Ellen. L. Weiser, Ph.D.

“I was truly honored to be so highly thought of by the dean,” says Ellen Weiser, chair and professor of the Department of Chemistry and Physical Sciences and assistant director of the master’s program in environmental science, when she learned of receiving this award.

In her 24-year career at Pace, Dr. Weiser’s contributions to Pace have been many. She has participated on numerous committees such as the curriculum committee, the core curriculum task force, the scholarly research committee, and two Dean search committees. She has been chair of the Pleasantville Faculty Council and vice chair of the Dyson Assembly. Additionally, she is director of the biochemistry program and chair of the Pre-Medical Advisory Committee on the Pleasantville campus. Ellen also coordinates the “Math Counts” competition sponsored by the New York State Society of Professional Engineers and the Ciba High School Chemistry Institute.

“I’ve enjoyed my time at Pace immensely, and am most proud of having mentored and taught students who have gone on to successful academic and professional careers,” says Dr. Weiser.

Born and raised in the Bronx, Dr. Weiser holds a B.S. in chemistry from City College of New York and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the City University of New York Graduate Center. Her research interest is as a protein biochemist with an expertise in chromatography. She is a member of the American Chemical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Phi Beta Kappa. She has been published in the Journal of Chromatography and the Journal of Biochemistry.

Active in the community, she is a past member of the board of trustees of her synagogue and has been an active participant in scouting.

Dr. Weiser and her husband Steve reside in Pleasantville and have a son and daughter, both in college, and two black Labradors. Her interests include gardening, needlework, the piano, and swimming.
Assistant Professor of Chemistry Karen Root Caldwell was granted a United States patent October 15 as a result of experimental research carried out at Pace University.

Dr. Caldwell, an organic chemist, invented a process for producing thin sheets of copper required in her study of organic chemical reactions on metal surfaces, work that has implications in the manufacture of rust inhibitors, adhesives, and lubricants.

Her invention arose out of a need to find a practical and economical solution to a problem encountered during the course of her research. The four-inch square, 0.001-inch thick copper sheets Dr. Caldwell needed for her research normally retail for about $500 each. It would have cost $50,000 to buy the amount she required for a critical phase of her project. Rather than throw away two-and-a-half years of work, and disrupt her students' work, she sought to produce foils in the lab, herself.

“Sometimes, it’s only when you’re faced with a brainteaser that you start to think outside the box,” she said. “To my surprise, the idea worked better than I expected.”

Her patented process involves adhering a copper disk to a wooden dowel attached to a stirring motor. The disk is rotated at approximately 200-300-rpm and lowered into corrosive acid for approximately seven minutes, producing a disk of comparable quality to the commercially available metal. Dr. Caldwell’s solution allowed her to proceed with her study of chemistry at metal surfaces.

Dr. Caldwell's research has been supported by Pace University's Scholarly Research Fund and by the Dyson College of Arts & Sciences. The key experiments that led to the now-patented process were carried out in the summer of 1998, with the help of a Dyson College Dean's Summer Research stipend.

The potential uses include applications in microelectronics, sensor fabrication, specialty metal coatings and finishing products, and computer technologies. It also has potential application where metal foils are used in a decorative, artistic or architectural manner, and for use in jewelry design. Dr. Caldwell plans to explore the commercial possibilities with Lubin faculty.