Famous and Lesser Known Members of the University of Michigan Medical School Who Have Made a Difference: A Historical View (POSTER)

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Dr. Keith Black is an American neurosurgeon born in Auburn, Alabama who published his first scientific paper at age 17, earning the Westinghouse Science Award. At the University of Michigan, Black earned both his undergraduate and medical degrees in six years as well as completed an internship in general surgery and residency in neurological surgery. Black is a pioneer researcher in the blood brain barrier and brain tumors. His research interests include gene arrays to develop molecular profiles of tumors, use of optical technology to map the brain, and the use of laser microsurgery to precisely destroy brain tumors. Currently, Black is Chairman and Professor, Department of Neurosurgery, Edwin Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

1991 Graduates from University of Michigan Medical School
1987 Completes residency and fellowship at University of Michigan Medical School & becomes Head of the Comprehensive Brain Tumor Program at the UCLA Medical Center
1997 Director of the Division of Neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
1997 Founds the Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute at Cedars-Sinai
2007 Opens the Cochran Brain Tumor Center at Cedars-Sinai

Jacob ‘Jack’ Kevorkian, M.D. (1928-2011)

Dr. Jack Kevorkian aka Dr. Death is infamously known as a fervent advocate of doctor assisted suicide for terminally ill patients. Born in Pontiac, Kevorkian attended the University of Michigan Medical School, studying to be a pathologist, and served as an Army medic during the Korean War. In his early career at UM hospital and later Pontiac General Hospital, Kevorkian displayed an obsession with death and dying, studying patient’s eyes to determine the exact moment of death, and publishing radical ideas on the ethics of euthanasia for terminally ill patients. Kevorkian marked his first public assisted suicide of Janet Adams, an elderly woman with Alzheimer’s and awakened the local community, state authorities, and the nation. In 1998, CBS’ 60 Minutes broadcast the lethal injection of Thomas Youk, a sufferer of Lou Gehrig’s Disease and the first to use Dr. Kevorkian’s methods successfully killing thousands. Kevorkian was arrested, charged with second-degree murder, tried, and sentenced to 10-25 years in prison. He was released in 2007 after only serving eight years of his sentence for good behavior.

1952 Graduates from University of Michigan Medical School
1990 First public assisted suicide of Janet Adams, an elderly woman diagnosed with Alzheimer’s
1998 CBS’ 60 Minutes broadcasts the lethal injection of Thomas Youk
2007 Released from prison for good behavior after only eight years of his sentence for second-degree murder

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H. (1944–)

Dr. Antonia Novello is recognized as the first woman and first Hispanic to be appointed the Surgeon General of the United States. Born in Puerto Rico, she earned her undergraduate and medical degrees at the University of Puerto Rico. Traveling to the United States, she completed her pediatric internship and residency at the University of Michigan in addition to subsequently training in pediatric nephrology at UN and George Washington University. Novello entered the Public Health Service in 1978 and served as the 14th Surgeon General of the United States from 1990-1993. In 2009, after serving seven years as the 13th New York State Health Commissioner and managing the September 11th disaster, the New York Inspector General brought up charges against Novello with one count of defrauding the government, three counts of first degree murder, and an additional 600 counts of mail fraud and wire fraud. Currently, she is the Director, Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions and president and co-founder of the Caron Scholars Fund for young people.

Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., M.D. (1951–)

Born in Detroit and emerging from an impoverished childhood, Dr. Benjamin Carson is now one of the most renowned neurosurgeons of our time. He attended Yale University with a degree in Psychology and continued his education at the University of Michigan Medical School. One of his most recognized triumphs is the first successful separation of Siamese twins joined at the back of the head in addition to further advancements in pediatric neurosurgery, oncology, and plastic surgery. Carson has received over 50 honorary degrees and awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2008. Currently, he is the Director, Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions and president and co-founder of the carson scholars fund for young people.

James V. Neel, M.D., Ph.D. (1919-2000)

Dr. James Neel is lauded as the father of modern human genetics and one of the first people to articulate the importance of human genetics in diagnosis and treatment of disease. Neel completed his M.D. and Ph.D. at the University of Rochester, New York. He accepted a position at the University of Michigan Medical School in 1946, where he worked for 39 years. Neel became a professor in the Department of Internal Medicine and the Department of Human Genetics and served as Chairman of the Department of Human Genetics from 1956 to 1981. Neel served on numerous committees from a local to global level and received many accolades for his work. His research covered numerous topics, including sickle cell anemia, effects of atomic radiation, schizophrenic disease, and the ‘triffy gene’ hypothesis.

Milestones
1986 Begins studies of the effects of radiation exposure in survivors of the atomic bomb in Japan
1994 Joins the University of Michigan as assistant geneticist in the Laboratory of Vertebrate Biology
1948 Helps establish the American Society of Human Genetics and writes the first paper for the American Journal of Human Genetics
1952 Establishes the University of Michigan Heredity Clinic, the groundwork for the Department of Human Genetics, which was founded in 1955 and the first such department in the nation

Janet Adkins, an elderly woman with Alzheimer’s and diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease, is injected with Thomas Dunitz, a sufferer of Lou Gehrig’s disease, affects of atomic radiation, consanguineous marriage, and the ‘triffy gene’ hypothesis.

Herman W. Mudgett (1816-1860)

Herman Mudgett, also known as Dr. Henry Howard Holmes, is considered to be America’s first known serial killer. Mudgett was expelled from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1884 for stealing corpses. Many details of Mudgett’s life are uncertain, including the exact number of his victims, as many of his records were burned or modified by his story. In 1893, he built and opened a hotel in Chicago for the World’s Fair. This hotel was the site of one of his murders and housed soundproof rooms, a stretching rack, and doors that opened only from the outside. He sold several of his victims’ skeletons and organs to medical schools. He was arrested in 1894, found guilty of murder, and executed by hanging in 1896.

Milestones
1884 Expelled from the University of Michigan Medical School
1893 Builds and opens a hotel in Chicago for the 1893 World’s Fair. This hotel was the location of many of his murders.
2003 Erik Larson publishes Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America, a novel exploring Mudgett’s murders and the planning of the 1893 World’s Fair.