Call it the anniversary effect. The 1959 Class of the Pritzker School of Medicine had the highest percentage turnout of class members during the 2009 reunion weekend, which took place June 4-7. The class, which was celebrating the half-century mark, also won an award for increasing charitable giving to the school.

“We’ve had reasonable turnouts before, but not like the 50th,” said class chairman Coleman Seskind, MD ’59, who practices internal medicine in Chicago. “We were a small class. There were only 72 of us. With deaths we were down to around 56. I called everybody. I called in all kinds of markers.”

The Pritzker School of Medicine Class of 1989 at its class dinner.
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Although class members are now in their 70s, retirement wasn’t a hot topic. “Retirement is sort of a dirty word for people of my generation,” said Seskind. “Doctors don’t retire.”

Another class celebrating a big anniversary—the Class of 1989—had a smaller but not insignificant turnout. Thirteen of 104 class members attended, according to class chair Christopher “Kit” Young, MD. Lively discussions ensued about the university’s growth and current status as well as President Obama’s proposed health care overhaul. The group also talked about its new Facebook group, which is intended to help class members stay in closer touch.

“Our class was quite close but we lost our cohesion. I think this reunion was just what we needed to build up our cohort again,” said Young. “We think this could be the start of something big.”

In total, more than 200 medical alumni and guests gathered for the three-day event, which included a tour of the recently completed Gwen and Jules Knapp Center for Biomedical Discovery and a presentation on the Medical Center’s Urban Health Initiative.
“We are witnessing a battle for the soul of American medicine,” Atul Gawande, MD, told graduates. “You are our hope for how this battle will play out.”

Gawande Motivates Pritzker Graduates

In one way, doctors have been relatively unscathed by the nation’s worst economic downturn since the Great Depression: Unemployment among physicians is practically non-existent. But that doesn’t mean they can afford to be complacent, warned Atul Gawande, MD, (above right) surgeon and best-selling medical author, as he addressed more than 100 graduates of the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine June 12.

The ranks of the uninsured are swelling. Medical-related bankruptcies among patients are increasing. Hospitals that were losing money before the recession are considering desperate measures such as closing down. “We will be affected by what is going on in our country,” Gawande said.

He pushed graduates to take a bigger role in controlling U.S. health care costs, a challenge that President Barack Obama has called “the biggest threat to our nation’s balance sheet.” In locations where health care spending is higher, Gawande noted, patients do not do better in terms of survival or functional ability. “If anything, they seemed to do worse,” he said.

Gawande also urged the new doctors not to view patients as “revenue streams” and encouraged them to study their peers who have found ways to keep costs low while providing quality, patient-centered care.

The Pritzker medical class is well-prepared to embrace the interdisciplinary challenges facing the profession. Almost 20 percent of graduates also have earned master’s degrees or PhDs in fields as diverse as business and public health.

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The medical school and the Biological Sciences Division hold a joint graduation ceremony but have separate speakers who are selected by their respective students. This year, the 40 biological sciences PhD graduates were addressed by Kathie Olsen, PhD, senior advisor at the National Science Foundation. She urged them to consider a career path that would take them beyond the laboratory into areas of policy and administration.

Graduates of the Pritzker School of Medicine Take Their Next Steps as Doctors

It’s one of the most nerve-wracking moments in the lives of medical students: Match Day, the day they find out where they will do their medical residencies. This spring, almost 30,000 medical students around the country participated in Match, a record number that included 110 students from the Pritzker School of Medicine.

For the second year in a row, the largest number of Pritzker students—19—headed to the University of Chicago Medical Center. Nine became residents at Northwestern University Hospitals and seven were matched to Harvard-affiliated medical institutions, including two at Massachusetts General Hospital. The fourth and fifth most popular destinations for Pritzker students were Stanford University-related programs and University of Washington-affiliated hospitals.

While the top three destinations for Pritzker students remained the same, there was a shift in the specialties they will pursue. Twenty-nine residents in the 2009 class will focus on internal medicine, up 20 percent from 2008. Fourteen students are specializing in pediatrics, almost double the number who chose that field a year earlier. Nine students in the 2009 class are pursuing orthopaedic surgery, up from four in 2008.

Stephanie Donald, 26, found out she would be starting her first year of residency in emergency medicine at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. “I’m thrilled and relieved that this day is finally here and my match is everything I had been hoping for!” It was a great four years, and Pritzker really prepared me well for this next step.”
“Andrew was a natural leader among his peers, respected, fair, ethical and always concerned about what was best for his patients. He was a humanist in the true sense of the word.”

John Mislow, MD, PhD

“John was a terrific person, an inspiration. He had a great work ethic. When he was your doctor, you knew he was going to be there with you day or night, completely committed.”

Andrew Swanson, MD

Since their deaths, the award has been renamed the Mislow-Swanson Denali Pro Award, said Maureen McLaughlin, a spokesman for Denali National Park.

Mislow, 39, was in his fifth year of a seven-year residency in neurosurgery at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston where he was regarded as a rising star. He graduated from Pritzker in 2004 and was married to dermatologist Linda Wang, MD, JD, another Pritzker graduate. The couple has two sons.

“He had an incredible passion and boundless enthusiasm for life, a deep sense of service and a wonderful sense of humor,” Wang said. “He could make me laugh no matter what kind of a day I was having.”

Mislow grew up in Princeton, NJ. His father, Kurt Mislow, PhD, is professor of chemistry emeritus at Princeton University, and his mother, Jacqueline Mislow, MD, PhD, is a retired internist.

“He was a terrific person, an inspiration. He had a great work ethic. When he was your doctor, you knew he was going to be there with you day or night, completely committed.” Arthur Day, MD, chairman of neurosurgery at Brigham and Women’s, told the Boston Globe.

During the last two years of his neurosurgery training, Mislow worked as a postdoc in the Brown University lab of John Donoghue, PhD, on the BrainGate project, an effort to restore movement, control and independence to people with paralysis by directly connecting their brains to the outside world when they had been disconnected by disease or spinal cord injury.

Swanson’s mother, Edyie Swanson, told the Associated Press her son loved donating his time twice a year in Africa, working with children with severe spine deformities. “He was so handsome, so kind, so irresistible,” she said.

Swanson had completed eight trips to Africa, the most recent just a few weeks before his death. In one of his trips, he volunteered to visit the jungles of Sierra Leone to find the most crippled children afflicted with tuberculosis of the spine who would later benefit from complex spine surgery and be given a new chance at life.

Swanson’s sister, Molly Britt said: “The world is a better place because both Andrew and John were here, although much too briefly. Their deaths are a great loss to all humanity, and especially to those who were lucky enough to have loved them.”

In a letter to Pritzker faculty and staff, Holly Humphrey, MD, dean for medical education, said she had received an “outpouring of correspondence expressing concern and great sympathy for the families.” She added that “John and Andrew carved out exceptional careers for themselves.”

A memorial fund is being established by the Pritzker School in memory of Mislow and Swanson. Contributions made to this fund will support biological sciences and medical education as well as research.

The following memorial Web sites also have been set up for both men:
www.web.me.com/wchutkow/John_Mislow_Memorial/Home.html
www.andrewswansomemorial.wordpress.com
1940s
Dorothea Warsaw Saxner, SB ’47, SM ’48, is the former vice president of American Hospital Publishing, Inc. She is retired and lives in Ann Arbor, Mich. with her husband Harold R. Johnson.

1950s
Yuande F. Bausch, MD ’57, is retired and enjoying a life of leisure.
John R. Benfield, MD ’55, was selected as “A Legend” by the faculty and staff of the Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor UCLA Medical Center. This award recognizes Benfield’s long-term positive influence from 1967 to 1977.

Eric Edward Conn, PhD ’50, writes that after 41 years of teaching introductory biochemistry and plant biochemistry in the University of California at Berkley and Davis, he retired in 1989. Sadly, his wife, Louise (Kael) Conn, AB ’54, died in 2002. He met Louise in Chicago, and after she worked for four years in Paris with the American Friends Service Committee, they married in 1959. Their two sons also live in Davis. They enjoyed sabbatical years in Cambridge, England (1966), Palmerston North, New Zealand (1965-1966) and Adelaide, Australia (1981-1982). His research on HCN-producing compounds in plants dictated the choice of those countries for research purposes. In 1988, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in recognition of his research.

Howard Goldfine, PhD ’52, had a busy year as co-chair of Penn’s Year of Evolution. They enjoyed having a visit by Neil Shubin at the beginning of the year. All incoming freshmen were given his book Inner Fish to read.

Sanford B. Krantz, AB ’34, SB ’56, MD ’59, retired in 2004 and is currently Emeritus Professor of Medicine/Hematology at Vanderbilt University Medical School. He and his wife, Sandra, have been traveling extensively with University Alumni to the Greek Isles, China, Egypt, South Africa and Brazil. Sanford and Sandra celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 28, 2008. They initiated the Sanford B. and Sandra B. Krantz Scholarship in the college of the University of Chicago because of all the college has done for them.

Henry Rothschild, MD ’58, is working on a master’s degree in liberal sciences at SMU.
Paul Sletwiner, AB ’55, SB ’56, MD ’59, is still in the practice of clinical neurology, though no longer running around hospitals or having to deal with hospital politics. His four boys, all college graduates, are still in use. He also is slowly working on a degree in accounting.

Ronald R. Wemple, MD ’55, spent late May and June bicycling touring in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

1960s
William C. Allen, MD ’60, a Professor Emeritus at the University of Missouri School of Medicine Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, has established an endowment at the University of Missouri called the William C. and Kathryn E. Allen Distinguished Professor in Orthopaedic Surgery. A similar endowment was established in 2004.

Judith T. Broder, SB ’60, MD ’63, founded and directs The Soldiers Project, which provides unlimited, free, confidential psychological services to all service members and their loved ones who have served in the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts.

Gordon M. Burghardt, SB ’63, PhD ’66, was a visiting professor at the Kyoto University Museum from June to October 2008, doing research in the Department of Zoology and at the Kyoto Primate Institute.

Robert W. Ridley, MD ’62, is working now as an ophthalmologist two days a week. He also is slowly working on a degree in accounting.

Joseph B. Simpson, PhD ’70, is still working in radiation oncology as chief of Central Nervous System oncology services at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Joan Carlson Watson, MD ’62, is in her fifth season as “loung mom” for the Florence Freedom, Frontier League Professional Baseball, specializing in pitchers.

1970s
Eugene C. Corbett, Jr., MD ’70, and his wife, Sue, continue to live on their small farm in rural Virginia and work at the University of Virginia.

Theodore M. Inglis, MD ’71, is happily semi-retired, working three days a week and not doing surgery.

Wynn K. Jackson, MD ’79, has been practicing psychiatry and psychoanalysis in Greenwich, Conn., for almost 20 years. Her husband, John Kneip, is a finance professor at the University of Connecticut, and her daughter, Elizabeth, is a freshman at Columbia.

Ruediger Kratz, MD ’73, has been serving as the Director of Neurology Services at DuBuisson Regional Medical Center since 2003.

Thomas D. Webb, MD ’79, is the vice chair of the Department of Anesthesiology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, Calif., as well as medical director of the OR Operations.

1980s
John Metcalfe Blair, Jr., MD ’89, now has five kids with twin girls born in October of 2008.

Mark Elliott Brecher, MD ’82, writes that after more than 20 years in academia, he is leaving his position as professor and vice chair, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of North Carolina, to become chief medical officer of the Laboratory Corporation of America. His older daughter is a third-year college student at the University of Chicago.

The late Ronald M. Davis, AM ’81, MD ’83, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his distinguished tobacco control efforts by the American Legacy Foundation. Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop presented the award to Davis’ widow, Nadine Davis.

Robert A. Gluckman, MD ’82, was elected to the Board of Regents of the American College of Physicians, the national organization of internists. His three-year term began this year. Gluckman is chief medical officer of Teaching Clinics in the Providence Physician Division of the Providence Health System in Portland.

Keith A. Horvath, AB ’83, MD ’87, is working on cardiac stem cells, MRI-guided surgery and xenotransplants.
1990s

Stephen R. Lyle, AB ’88, SM ’98, PhD ’93, MD ’95, was promoted to associate professor in the Department of Cancer Biology at UMass Medical School in February 2009.

Edward R. Sherwood III, MD ’94, was appointed director of the MD – PhD combined degree program at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston. Sherwood is professor and vice chair for research in the Department of Anesthesiology and holder of the James F. Arens Endowed Chair in Anesthesiology. He also holds a joint appointment in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

2000s

Pat Aversek Bau, MBA ’95, MD ’95, was named the 2009 Stanford Consultant Physician of the Year by the Emergency Departments of Stanford University and Kaiser Permanente. This award is given to the physician who, on a regular basis, acts in the best interest of patient care through clinical knowledge, action, teaching and leadership.

Dawn Nicole (Wilson) Dlugosz, SM ’96, writes that she married Joe Dlugosz in 2007. She worked at Children’s Memorial Hospital for three years, where she conducted epilepsy research.

Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD ’94, was elected vice speaker of the House of Delegates of the Massachusetts Medical Society at the organization’s May 2009 meeting. Ehrenfeld is on the faculty at Harvard Medical School, as well as an assistant in anesthesia in the Department of Anesthesia and Critical Care at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Laura Anne Hanyok, MD ’93, finished her residency and chief residency in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. She now practices internal medicine at Bayview and is an assistant professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Benjamin Kyle Potter, MD ’01, is currently the director of musculoskeletal oncology and orthopaedic surgery liaison to the Amputee Patient Care Program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He cares for patients with cancer and amputees and other combat-injured service members from Iraq and Afghanistan. He is married to Michelle DiVito, MD ’01 with two children, Hazel, 2, and James, 1.

Nirav Dinesh Shah, JD ’07, MD ’08, is currently teaching a seminar at Pettalk on Global Public Health and is hoping to make the jump into the world of global health care soon.

Jay William Zimmerman, MD ’92, has a second daughter, Bryn, born on January 10, 2009. He and his wife live in Burlingame, Calif. Zimmerman works in the Bay Area as a dermatologist with the Berman Skin Institute.

2010s

Former Housestaff

Geoffrey Braden, MD, (internal medicine, 1975-1979), is heavily involved with medical informatics. He works with Medscape Gastroenterology and is associate editor of online education for the American Gastroenterological Association.

Alberto Gedissman, MD, MMS, FAAP, (pediatric residency 1972), writes that his latest effort has been to combat the childhood obesity epidemic by creating a center for comprehensive intervention.

In Memoriam

1940s

Hiller L. Baker, Jr., LAB ’40, SB ’44, MD ’46, passed away in December at the age of 84. After graduating from medical school at the University of Chicago, Baker joined the Mayo Clinic in 1953, and then served for two years in the Army Medical Corps at West Point. A staff radiologist and professor of radiology at Mayo for more than 40 years, he was a pioneer in computer tomography. In 1973, Baker brought the first CT scanner in the country to Mayo. He was the recipient of numerous honors and awards from medical societies. Baker’s wife and son preceded him in death. He is survived by two daughters and two grandchildren.

Walther W. Meyer, MD ’47, passed away in March.

1950s

Frederick P. Zuspan, MD ’51, an internationally recognized authority in the field of maternal-fetal medicine, died of prostate cancer in June. Zuspan was the former chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Chicago and an expert on preclampsia. In the 1960s, he pioneered the use of intravenous magnesium sulfate to prevent convulsions in women with preclampsia, a protocol that was adopted internationally and is still in use. He also was an outspoken advocate for a woman’s right to choose, arguing publicly for faster and more sensitive pregnancy tests, insurance coverage for abortions, and improved access to the procedure. Zuspan came to the University of Chicago in 1966 and remained until he was recruited back to the Ohio State University College of Medicine, his alma mater and home state, in 1975. He stepped down as department chair in 1987. He is survived by two siblings; his wife of 66 years, Mary Jane Cox; three children and seven grandchildren.

1960s

Paul R. Hyman, MD ’62, passed away in April.