Philosophy Prof Belnap, Katz Alum Smith Elected American Academy of Arts and Sciences Fellows

This is the third consecutive year a Pitt philosophy professor has received this honor.

Belnap is a member of the American Philosophical Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science and has served as an officer of the Association for Symbolic Logic, the Society for Exact Philosophy, and the Mind Association. His present interests lie principally in philosophical logic as well as in metaphysics, the philosophy of the social sciences, and computer science.

Belnap’s other honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1975-76; a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in 1982-83; a 1993 Chancellor’s Distinguished Research Award, Senior Category, and a Doctor of Philosophy Honoris Causa from Leipzig University in 2000.

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Belnap received a BA degree from the University of Illinois in 1952 and MA and PhD degrees from Yale University in 1957 and 1960, respectively. Smith began his career as an engineer-trainee at Bell of Pennsylvania in 1959. During his tenure, Smith held various positions in the company, earning the title of president and CEO in 1983. When the company merged to become Bell Atlantic in 1985, he was named vice chair and CFO, rising to chair, president, and CEO in 1989, positions he held until 1998. At Bell Atlantic, he oversaw the acquisitions of NYNEX and GTE, two of the largest transactions in business history. In 1999, Smith became chair of Verizon Ventures.

In 2005, Smith was named a Pitt Legacy Laureate, the first Pitt alumus to be so recognized, and in 2016, he received the Spirit of Achievement Award from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, honoring him for his continuing service to the University of Pittsburg and the Armstrong Scholarship Foundation.

In addition to earning an MBA degree from the National Center for Learning Disabilities, Smith is a board member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Education, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Education, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Education, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

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Woodruff Highlighted in Exhibition at Holocaust Museum

Sharon S. Blake

The dramatic 1936 Olympic victory of late Pitt alumnus and track star John Woodruff—as well as the actual Olympic gold medal he received for winning the 800-meter race in the 1936 games—are highlighted in a new special exhibition, The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936, at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The 1936 gold medal has been at the Pitt library since 1990, when Woodruff donated it to the University.

The exhibition recounts the history of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, which Adolf Hitler’s Nazi dictatorship exploited by downplaying the Third Reich’s racist, militaristic character and attempting to project the illusion of a peace-loving, tolerating Germany. There was talk of an Olympic boycott, but some Black newspapers of the era opposed the idea. Journalists at those papers felt it was hypocritical to boycott the Berlin Olympics without first addressing the problem of discrimination in the United States against Black athletes. Ultimately, 18 Black athletes competed, 16 men and two women, triple the number that had competed in the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. The 1936 group included Jesse Owens, who ended up winning four gold medals, a record at that time.

A lanky 21-year-old who lacked international running experience, Woodruff got booted in by veteran runners after the 1936 800-meter race’s first 300 meters. Realizing he would be disqualified if he fouled another runner, he did the unthinkable—he stopped running, moved over to the track’s third lane, let the other runners pass him by, and then began again. As he took off from the back, he would be disqualified if he fouled another runner. As he took off from the back, he passed one rival after another. He was leading the pack when the finish line came into view, and he sprinted forward, breaking the tape at 1:52.9. The New York Herald Tribune called Woodruff’s stop-and-restart technique the “most daring move ever seen on a track.”

Woodruff died on Oct. 30, 2007, at age 92. According to The New York Times, he was the last survivor of the 12 U.S. men who won track and field gold medals at the 1936 Olympics.

Woodruff received the Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Pitt in 1939. In October 2006, he visited his alma mater for the last time to be honored during Homecoming events for the 70th anniversary of his storied Olympic victory.

The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936 originally opened at the Holocaust Museum to mark the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Games and to coincide with the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. It reopened last month with some new additions, including Woodruff’s gold medal, which will be returned to Pitt when the exhibition closes; the medal will be housed in a new exhibition display at Pitt’s Hillman Library this fall. The summer’s special exhibition also features a videotaped interview with Woodruff, in which he described the discrimination he faced after returning to America as an Olympic champion.

“The After the Olympics, we had a track meet to run at Annapolis, at the Naval Academy, and there I am, an Olympic champion, and they told the coach that I couldn’t run. I couldn’t come. So I had to stay home, because of discrimination. That let me know just what the situation was. Things hadn’t changed,” Woodruff explained in the interview.

During Woodruff’s final visit to the University, at the Oct. 20, 2006, Varsity Letter Club Annual Dinner, Pitt Chancellor Daniel P. D’Ambrosio introduced him with a tribute, honoring Woodruff and then addressed him personally, saying, “John, you and I now have known each other for a number of years, and you never have mentioned that [Naval Academy] incident to me. In fact, I do not know if I ever would have learned about it, if I had not been preparing for your homecoming. But speaking, both personally and for the University of Pittsburgh, I want to apologize to you—and I feel certain that, if those responsible for leading our University 70 years ago were here today, they would stand with me and join me in this expression of regret.”

To tour an online version of this exhibition, visit www.ushmm.org/nazioslympics.
Chancellor Nordenberg, Board of Trustees, faculty, the University community, and, especially, the graduates of the 2008 class: It’s my honor to speak to you today. I graduated in ’83. Do the math. Twenty-five years later. Wow!

When I came to Pitt as a freshman, I had two goals. One was to be the starting quarterback. The other, I made a promise to my mother that I would graduate just like all of you today. I accomplished both goals. I was very proud of that, and all of you should be very proud to be Pitt graduates.

But never in my wildest dreams did I imagine receiving a doctorate in broadcast journalism. Now that I have one, I’ll be sure to let my colleagues at the CBS NFL Today show—Shannon, Boomer, James Brown, and Coach Cowher—know that I will demand that they now call me “Dr. Dan.”

Chancellor, thank you for the honor. I think I’m going to ask CBS for a raise!

They’d sneak me into games. I remember watching Tony Dorsett and the ’76 team that won the national championship. I can still see Tony walking on campus with his Pitt letterman jacket. That’s when I really became a huge Pitt fan. I have so many great memories as a student athlete…going to four Bowl Games and especially the ’82 Sugar Bowl.

Coming from behind against Georgia was one of our biggest wins. I’ll never forget standing here, as a freshman, when this was the old football field—my first game against Kansas. My first pass was intercepted. That wasn’t a good memory. But my second pass was a touchdown. So no matter how you look at it, I was two-for-two with a touchdown. Pretty good start!

But my fondest memories were not only the games I played here in front of my family and friends, but my dad actually sitting in the stands watching me practice almost every day.

Now, today, 25 years after graduating, I’m standing here before you graduates. And I’m supposed to offer some thoughts as you go into what...So don’t lose the personal touch in life. Nurture your relationships, and they will come back to you 1,000 times over. The personal relationships you make will carry you through life.”

—Dan Marino

Continued on page 4
my dad used to call (finger quotes) “the real world.”

My dad never graduated from college, but he knew what the real world was all about. It was about family, hard work, and passion for what you do. He’d always say, “You only get out of life what you put into it.” Little did he or I know, the real world today would be a technologically seen society full of computers, text messaging, e-mails, video games, the Internet, and my personal favorite, YouTube.

But as much as the environment and the atmosphere of this campus have changed, the core values of life and success remain the same: Hard Work/Passion/In- terpersonal skills are still important, family.

Family is especially appropriate today. All of you have someone in your life that has instilled these values and helped you get to this moment right now sitting in your caps and gowns.

In fact, before this day is over, before all the fun and the celebrating, make sure you thank your parents, your brothers and sisters, and whoever helped you get to this day—whether helped with this achievement of graduating and moving on in life.

Of course, the best way to thank them is to make use of the degree that you’ve worked so hard for. And to me, one of the most important things as you enter the real world is to find what you love to do.

When I think back, I was lucky. I found my love for sports at a young age. And whether it was baseball or football, I found my true talent. I could throw it. All the hours on the practice field, all the days studying film, and all the years of working on my game—it didn’t seem like work to me. Because it was fun. It’s what I loved to do.

It may take some of you longer, but it’s worth the search to find your passion. There will be obstacles. There always are to anything important. If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn’t lead anywhere. So whether it’s education, the arts, business, medicine, or politics, I encourage all of you find what you love to do.

So go after your passion—not simply a paycheck. It doesn’t have to be about the money. I guarantee you this: If you love your life’s work, the financial reward will take care of itself.

Just last week there was a report from careersbuilder.com that 84 percent of people are unhappy at work. Look at that and think it’s pretty sad. So find what you love to do and have a passion for it. Then find a way to do what you love to do.

Today we talked about finding what you love to do and having a passion for whatever you do. We talked about how important families and relationships are and having an impact on your community in a positive way. How the core values of life and success never change.

So 25 years from now when you look in the mirror, don’t look back and say, “I wish I had...” I wish I had worked harder. I wish I had followed my passion and dreams. I wish I made a change in my community. You want to look back and say, “I was the best I could be.” That’s what I worked hard and followed my dreams. That’s, “I made a change in people’s lives.”

If you can do that, then you will have peace of mind no matter what you achieve in life.

You may even be surprised by where your dreams take you. I’m a perfect example.

As I said, when I came to Pitt I just wanted to be the quarterback and get my degree. Now look at me. I’m Dr. Dan. Good luck, Class of 2008.

### Graduation Celebration

G. Reynolds Clark (left), Pitt vice chancellor for community initiatives and chief of staff in the Office of the Chancellor, David Shapiro (right), president and CEO of Ernst & Young Corporation, Kathy Humphrey, Pitt vice chancellor for student affairs, and Patrice Beeson, Pitt vice provost for graduates and undergraduate studies, spoke at an April 27 nighttime graduation celebration that was the first graduation for students who were unable to attend Pitt Commencement because it fell on the final day of Passover. Clark introduced Shapiro, a friend and benefactor of the University who delivered the keynote address to the approximately 150 participants in the celebration, including Pitt students graduating seniors, Shapiro’s sister, Ethel Laura Shapiro, who earned her JD degree at Pitt’s School of Medicine in 1980. Also speaking at the celebration were graduating Pitt seniors—Carl Baldwin and one of the event organizers, Shaneen Parker—as well as Hillel Jewish University Center of Pittsburgh executive director Aaron Wolf and Rabbi Aaron Bino of Temple Rodef Shalom. The event took place in the Lower Lounge of the William Pitt Union and was sponsored by Pitt’s Office of Student Affairs and the Hillel JUC.

### Edclampsia During Pregnancy May Flag Women at Heightened Risk of Heart Problems, Pitt Study Shows

By Michele D. Baum

C-reactive protein (CRP), an inflammatory marker associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, was found to be elevated even 30 years after a pregnancy distinguished by eclampsia, according to a study by the University of Pittsburgh-affiliated Magee-Womens Research Institute (MWRI). The finding indicates that pregnancy outcome may be a natural early stress test for future risk of cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death for women.

The study was published in Hypertension, a journal of the American Heart Association.

“We found that levels of CRP were doubled in postmenopausal women who had a prior episode of eclampsia compared to those who had a history of normal pregnancies,” said Carl Hubel, lead author, assistant professor of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences in the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and an MWRI assistant investigator. “The finding is even more striking because this difference remained after adjusting for other, potentially confounding risk factors such as age, weight, smoking and use of hormone-replacement therapy.”

A life-threatening complication of pregnancy, eclampsia occurs in 1 in 200 pregnancies and can involve coma, convulsions, and organ failure. About two women in 100,000 will develop preeclampsia during pregnancy. A smaller number, about 7 in 10,000, will develop eclampsia.

Although the use of magnesium sulfate can decrease the likelihood that a woman with preeclampsia will develop eclampsic seizures, the only effective treatment for the syndrome is immediate delivery, which can be dangerous for the baby if it is too early in the pregnancy.

“We propose that prior preeclampsia, particularly severe preeclampsia, be considered as a red flag to identify women of reproductive age who stand to benefit from cardiovascular risk factor modification,” Hubel said. “If we can identify these differences during a woman’s reproductive years and intervene with lifestyle changes early and aggressively, we may be able to impact her future risk.” Early screening here is vital.

For the study, Hubel and his colleagues compared data on 25 Icelandic women with prior eclampsia and 28 Icelandic women with normal pregnancies.

“In particular, elevated CRP during the first trimester of pregnancy may have also been associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk of developing preeclampsia in leaner women, indicating that pathways other than life weight and age may be involved in the development of the disease,” noted study author Adam Bisno of Temple Rodef Shalom. The event took place in the Lower Lounge of the William Pitt Union and was sponsored by Pitt’s Office of Student Affairs and the Hillel JUC.
Science & Technology

New UPCI Program Targets Genetic Mutations That Increase Cancer Risks

By Courtney McCrimmon

The University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI) has announced the establishment of the Frieda G. and Saul F. Shapira BRCA Cancer Research Program. BRCA 1 and 2 are two genes that, when mutated, dramatically increase the risk of breast, prostate, ovarian, and pancreatic cancers.

“I am excited about the addition of this research program to UPCI,” said Ronald Herberman, director of UPCI and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Cancer Centers. “The more we learn about these mutations, the better chance we have to target high-risk patients and to find innovative ways to reduce their cancer risk.”

Women who possess either mutation have a 50 to 80 percent lifetime risk of developing breast cancer, and the disease progresses more quickly than in individuals without the mutations. Experts estimate that as many as one out of every 345 people in the United States carries a BRCA mutation, but for individuals of Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jewish descent, the number is approximately one in 40.

These mutations have been linked primarily to an increased risk of breast cancer in women, but they also increase the risk for other cancers. Both men and women can carry the genetic mutations, which means they can be passed to children from either parent.

The Shapira Foundation committed an initial $1 million for the program, structuring the gift as a matching grant to raise an additional $1.5 million from individuals and foundations. UPMC is matching these gifts on a dollar-for-dollar basis, for an overall goal of $5 million.

“Currently, the burden of cancer costs each American approximately $936 a year,” Herberman said. “The National Cancer Institute’s budget supporting research amounts to only $21 per American annually. To fund promising cancer research, researchers need other means of support. A gift like the one we have received from the Shapira Foundation, complemented by funds from the community and UPMC, will go a long way in supporting this important program.”

Already, community leaders and local foundations have contributed $850,000 toward the fundraising goal. Founded in 1984, UPCI was designated as a Comprehensive Cancer Center by the National Cancer Institute in 1990. UPCI is the only comprehensive cancer center in western Pennsylvania. The institute receives a total of $154 million in research grants and is ranked 16th in funding from the NCI.

Sudden Death of Parent Boosts Risk of Depression in Surviving Children

By Megan Grote Quatrini

The children of parents who die suddenly—whether by suicide, accident, or natural causes—are three times more likely to develop depression and are at higher risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than children who don’t face such a difficult life event, according to a University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine study published in the current issue of the Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine, one of the JAMA/Archives journals.

In the first controlled, population-based study of its kind, the team of Pitt and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) researchers also found that parents who died of suicide had higher rates of bipolar disorder, alcohol and substance abuse, and personality disorders. Higher rates of these disorders are expected in suicide victims; however, those who died accidentally or from sudden natural death also had higher rates of psychiatric disorders—specifically, alcohol and substance abuse—and personality disorders, and showed a trend toward higher rates of bipolar disorder.

“The caregivers should be monitored and, if necessary, referred and treated of bipolar illness, substance and alcohol abuse, and personality disorders, as well as the significance of addressing the lifestyle associations of these illnesses that lead to premature deaths, according to Brent.

Coauthors of the study include researchers Monica Walker of Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic and professor of psychiatry, pediatrics, and epidemiology in Pitt’s School of Medicine.

Not surprisingly, we found that bereaved offspring are at increased risk for adverse outcomes in part because of factors that may have contributed to the parent’s death,” Brent added.

The study involved 140 families in which one parent had died of either suicide, accidental death—such as drug overdoses and car accidents—or sudden natural death. A control group consisted of 99 families with two living biological parents who were matched to the deceased parents in the study group based on sex, age, and neighborhood. Ages of the children at their parents’ deaths ranged from 7 to 25 years. Other factors that affected outcomes included the nature of the last conversation with the deceased. Researchers found that a caregiver’s recollection of a supportive conversation led to a higher risk of depression. “Understanding the effects of bereavement is essential to identifying those at highest risk who should be targeted for future prevention and intervention efforts,” noted Nadine Melhem, first author and a professor of psychiatry in Pitt’s School of Medicine.

These findings point out the importance of improving the detection and treatment of bipolar illness, substance and alcohol abuse, and personality disorders, as well as the significance of addressing the lifestyle associations of these illnesses that lead to premature deaths, according to Brent.

“Physicians should be alert to the increased risk for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder in bereaved offspring and in their surviving caregivers,” said David A. Brent, academic chief of child and adolescent psychiatry at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic and professor of psychiatry, pediatrics, and epidemiology in Pitt’s School of Medicine.

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“The caregivers should be monitored for depression and PTSD, because restoring their normal mental functioning could lead to more positive outcomes for the children,” Brent said. “However, given the increased risk of depression and PTSD, the bereaved children also should be monitored and, if necessary, referred and treated for their psychiatric disorders.”

Coauthors of the study include researchers Monica Walker of Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic and the Department of Psychiatry in Pitt’s School of Medicine and Grace Moritz from UPMC’s Division of Collaborative Care Medicine.
The council continues to be impressed with the quality and creativity of the proposals submitted each year. Those recommended for funding this year represented the best of a fine set of submissions from academic units across the entire University. While Pitt is a comprehensive research institution, it is clear that this awards program innovating teaching strikes a responsive chord among our faculty.”
Andrew Blair

Ronald Zboray, a communication professor, Joseph Grabowski, a chemistry professor, and Barbara Kucinski, a lecturer in the Department of Arts and Sciences, “Improving Undergraduate Education: Instructional Resources for Teaching Assistants (a Multimedia Web site and DVD).”

In 2006-07, there were approximately 1,000 graduate students employed as teaching assistants or teaching fellows at the University of Pittsburgh. This project will develop several short instructional videos to build a five-minute each that model the fundamental strategies and elements of classroom teaching. The videos could be accessed individually on a centralized Web site as a resource for improving teaching skills. The Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education will provide instructional design, graphics, and video production services.

Nuno Themudo, a professor of international affairs in Pitt’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), “Community Teaching Lab.”

The Community Teaching Lab will seek to address the lack of teaching skills among faculty. In particular, Themudo will introd...
Concerts
Vive Las Vegas with Jack Everly, May 14-15, Heinz Hall, 600 Penn Ave., Downtown, 8 p.m. May 19, Scottish Rite Cathedral, 1101 Lincoln Ave., New Castle, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, 412-328-7141.

A Musical Kaleidoscope, Andrea Cardenes, conductor and violinist, 8 p.m. May 15, Carnegie Music Hall, 4400 Forbes Ave., Downtown, 8 p.m. May 17, Upper St. Clair High School Theater, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, 412-328-7141.

May 31


Eyeball Portraits and Beyond + Neke

ninity," 612 Smithfield St., Downtown, Business Program Series, 412-281-7141.

“Is What Your FICO Score and How Is It Affecting Your Credit?” 12:15 p.m. May 29, 612 Smithfield St., Downtown, Business Program Series, 412-281-7141.

Eighth Annual Summer Reading

Exhibitions


Trinity Gallery, High Speed Infrared Film, through May 31, 7474 Hatfield St., Lawrenceville, 412-268-4585.


Lectures/Seminar/Readings
“So You Want to Write a Book,” 12:15 p.m. May 15, 612 Smithfield St., Downtown, Business Program Series, 412-281-7141.

“The Fats Waller Musical Show,” by Thomas Waller, 11 a.m. May 21, College of Creative Arts, Room 331.


Ain’t Misbehavin’: The Fats Waller Musical Show, directed and choreographed by Timothy Ware, who directed “Ain’t Misbehavin’” in 2002, Ware cofounded the Eclectic Dance Company at Alabama State University. The cast of “Ain’t Misbehavin’” pays tribute to the Black musicians of the 1920s and ’30s who were part of the Harlem Renaissance. Five performers present an evening of rowdy, raunchy, and humorous songs that encapsulate the moods of the era and reflect pianist Thomas Wright “Fats” Waller’s view of life as a journey meant for pleasure and play. The score includes such classics as “I Ain’t Nobody’s Bitch If I Do,” ‘The Joint Is Jumpin’,” “When the Nylon Bloom Again,” “Your Feet’s Too Big,” “I’m Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter,” and “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love.”

Pitt’s Kuny’s Repertory Theatre presents “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” the first musical to win the 1979 American Theater Wing’s Award for Best Musical, Best Featured Actress in a Musical, and Best Direction of a Musical. Its 1979 London production won the Laurence Olivier Award for Musical of the Year, and a 1982 NBC broadcast version won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement for Nell Carter and André De Shields’ performances.

The production will be directed and choreographed by Timothy Ware, who directed “Jelly’s Last Jam” in a 2005 Kuny production. He also has performed in the national tour of Broadway’s “Jesus Christ Superstar;” his directing credits include a Taste of Chocolate, Shockwave, Dutchman, and Shout: And the Wind Was Made Flesh. In 2002, Ware cofounded the Eclectic Dance Company at Alabama State University. The cast of “Ain’t Misbehavin’” includes Tasha Michelle, Les Howard, Steve Akers, Delana Flowers, and Tony Dixon.

The revue will mark the end of the 33rd season for Kuny’s Repertory Theatre, the oldest and largest continuing African American performing arts organization in Pittsburgh and the second-oldest theater company affiliated with a major research university.

General admission tickets are $20, with discounts available for students, seniors, and groups. For more information, contact Kuny’s Repertory Theatre at 412-624-7929 or visit www.kuny.org/aunce.php.
Outbreak! Pitt Program Helps High School Students Save City From Deadly Virus

By Morgan Kelly

May 5, 09:00: Last month, Panther Hospital in Pittsburgh admitted three patients with low-grade fever and flu-like symptoms. They soon developed a high fever, bone and joint pain, shortness of breath, and swollen glands. All three died within 16 days. As of this morning, 38 people have died under like circumstances and another 136 show symptoms.

And with that information, students from Butler County, Pa., Knoch High School's advanced biology class are starting their morning with saving Pittsburgh from a possible epidemic.

This is the scenario behind Outbreak, one of several educational outreach programs in the Department of Biological Sciences in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences that go beyond dissecting frogs to expose middle and high school students to biological labs and equipment they typically would have seen only on educational videos.

Acting as scientists from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Knoch High students are investigating a serious and mysterious wave of illness at the fictive Panther Hospital (Pitt’s Clapp Hall) using techniques and equipment similar to those that CDC investigators would employ to identify and contain a rampant virus. The students must uncover the germ responsible for the chaos and then determine whether it’s contagious.

Like CDC scientists, explains biological sciences’ outreach director Alison Slinsky Legg, the students know nothing about the scenario except for the few details provided when they arrive—they have to figure out the rest.

"This program emphasizes asking the right questions and thinking independently," she says. "They form their own conclusions based on their knowledge and the data. We don’t tell them anything, and if they pursue the wrong theory, we don’t stop them."

Patient A is in the advanced stages. Patient B was exposed to Patient A, but exhibits no symptoms. Patient C is a healthy individual never exposed to infected people.

Kendra Schira, a senior at Knoch, peers into a hemocytometer, a device for counting cells. Her thumb clicks a handheld counter as she records the number of cells in a sample from Patient A. She finds 70—this patient is very ill.

Schira and her classmates receive cell samples (prepared rat cells) from the three patients and analyze the samples for virus particles, cell morphology, and cell growth over a certain number of days. The students need to figure out that the infected cells—ravaged by a contagious tumor virus—grow in clumps and multiply quickly.

This information emerges as the students count cells and spot pathogens with an electron microscope, among other lab work. By trolling for answers, the students learn about basic biological equipment and research processes through application rather than disquisition, says David Hornack, a biological sciences senior lab specialist who helped design the program along with biological sciences research assistant professor M. Teresa Sáenz-Robles, microscopy facility manager Thomas Harper, and Slinsky Legg.

“We wanted to tie biological concepts and methods into a task and into one another," he says. “The students learn that these techniques are not islands, that they all produce results that help solve a problem. This is the core of science.”

The students’ teacher, Ray Greco, says Outbreak and the other outreach programs not only spark his students’ interest, but also reinvigorate his enjoyment of his own curriculum. Greco has taken part in several programs, including Pitt’s biological sciences’ Gene Team program, wherein selected high school biology teachers and students conduct actual research into gene-based health problems.

Greco translates those experiments into fresh lessons for his classes.

“We don’t just do lab procedures, we apply this science as it’s actually used," he says. “I can’t tell you how important these programs have been for them and for me. At a certain point, for teachers and students, school can just feel like a job, but with these workshops, you get the excitement of trying to accomplish something.”

Back in the main lab, Knoch senior Ford Stepp and junior Travis Tasker graph their hemocytometer cell counts for all three patients.

“That’s weird,” Stepp says, reviewing the data.

“Yeah, Patient B’s count leveled off,” Tasker interjects, turning his eyes to his paper to figure out why. …

For more information, visit the Biological Sciences Outreach Programs Web site at www.pitt.edu/~biohome/Dept/Frame/outreach.htm.