

# SARVER HEART CENTER

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 70 • WINTER 2014



## IMPROVING CARE OF HEART FAILURE PATIENTS WITH A COLLABORATIVE TEAM APPROACH

*By Nancy K. Sweitzer, MD, PhD,  
director of the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center  
and chief of the Division of Cardiology in the UA College of Medicine – Tucson*

Heart failure, a condition in which the heart muscle cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs, affects about 5.1 million people in the United States, according to the National Institutes of Health. Currently there is no cure for this condition that represents a major cause of repeated hospitalizations for Medicare patients and is a primary driver of Medicare costs. However, we know many treatments improve outcomes in heart failure, including medicines and lifestyle changes. More widespread use of these treatments by experienced clinicians would help thousands of people with heart failure live longer, more active lives.

Unfortunately, current treatments don't work well for all patients with heart failure and too often physicians struggle to find the right dose of medicines and the right combination of therapies to improve heart function for individual patients.

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# NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



*During my first half year as director of the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center, it has been very rewarding to get to know this Center's outstanding faculty and staff. Efforts on unifying our team in the pursuit of high-quality science, clinical care, and community education, with an emphasis on increasing the impact and visibility of the Sarver Heart Center are underway.*

*Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Unifying our scientists, clinicians and students in collaborative pursuits will push us to the forefront of cardiovascular medicine, scientific discovery and education of the next generation of academic leaders. The Sarver Heart Center is truly unique, providing high-quality cardiovascular care and pursuing cutting-edge research in both the basic and clinical sciences. The invaluable support provided by our donors helps our investigators pursue innovative and potentially game-changing ideas in the science of cardiovascular medicine.*

*All of this is possible because of the tremendous and ongoing tradition of research support from private donors in the form of multiple endowments, shared-equipment gifts, and the Sarver Heart Center Investigator Awards. The return on investment resulting from past support has been tremendous, with the scientists supported by these donations having subsequent remarkable success in obtaining extramural funding in the forms of grants and awards.*

*Some recent examples include: Henk Granzier, PhD, whose research focused on prevention of heart muscle dysfunction is supported by an endowment made possible by Allan and Alfie Norville, and Jil C. Tardiff, MD, PhD, whose research on hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is supported by an endowment established by the Steven M. Gootter Foundation. Alexander Simon, PhD, Taben Hale, PhD, and Dennis Pollow, MS, RD, all have been able to obtain national funding recently for their continued basic-science research because private supporters, just like you, decided to fund research grants that gave these scientists the opportunity to obtain critical preliminary data making their grant applications nationally competitive. These scientists are adding to our knowledge of cardiovascular disease, including chronic diseases of veins and how gender differences affect vascular remodeling and high blood pressure.*

*In addition, our advisory board members, women's and minority outreach committees, and development team work together to educate communities throughout Arizona about their cardiovascular risk. These groups have reached thousands through CPR and AED campaigns, lecture series, and heart health awareness events. The Minority Outreach Committee works tirelessly, with dozens of events each year, to reach underrepresented minorities and educate them about cardiovascular disease risk and how to save lives in their particularly high-risk communities using chest-compression-only CPR.*

*All of this is made possible because of our dedicated core administrative staff. I'm pleased to announce that Thom Melendez, M.Ed., recently joined our staff as director of development to round out our team. Thom, who has been with the UA since 2007, brings extensive knowledge of the Arizona Health Sciences Center, having worked in development for the UA Arthritis Center and the Department of Family and Community Medicine. (Read more about Thom on page 13.) I encourage anyone interested in learning more about increasing your involvement with Sarver Heart Center to contact Thom at 520-626-4146 or [heart@u.arizona.edu](mailto:heart@u.arizona.edu).*

*As we wrap up this year of huge transitions, I thank you for your continued support of the Sarver Heart Center as we move forward toward a future free of heart disease and stroke.*

**Nancy K. Sweitzer, MD, PhD**

Director, UA Sarver Heart Center



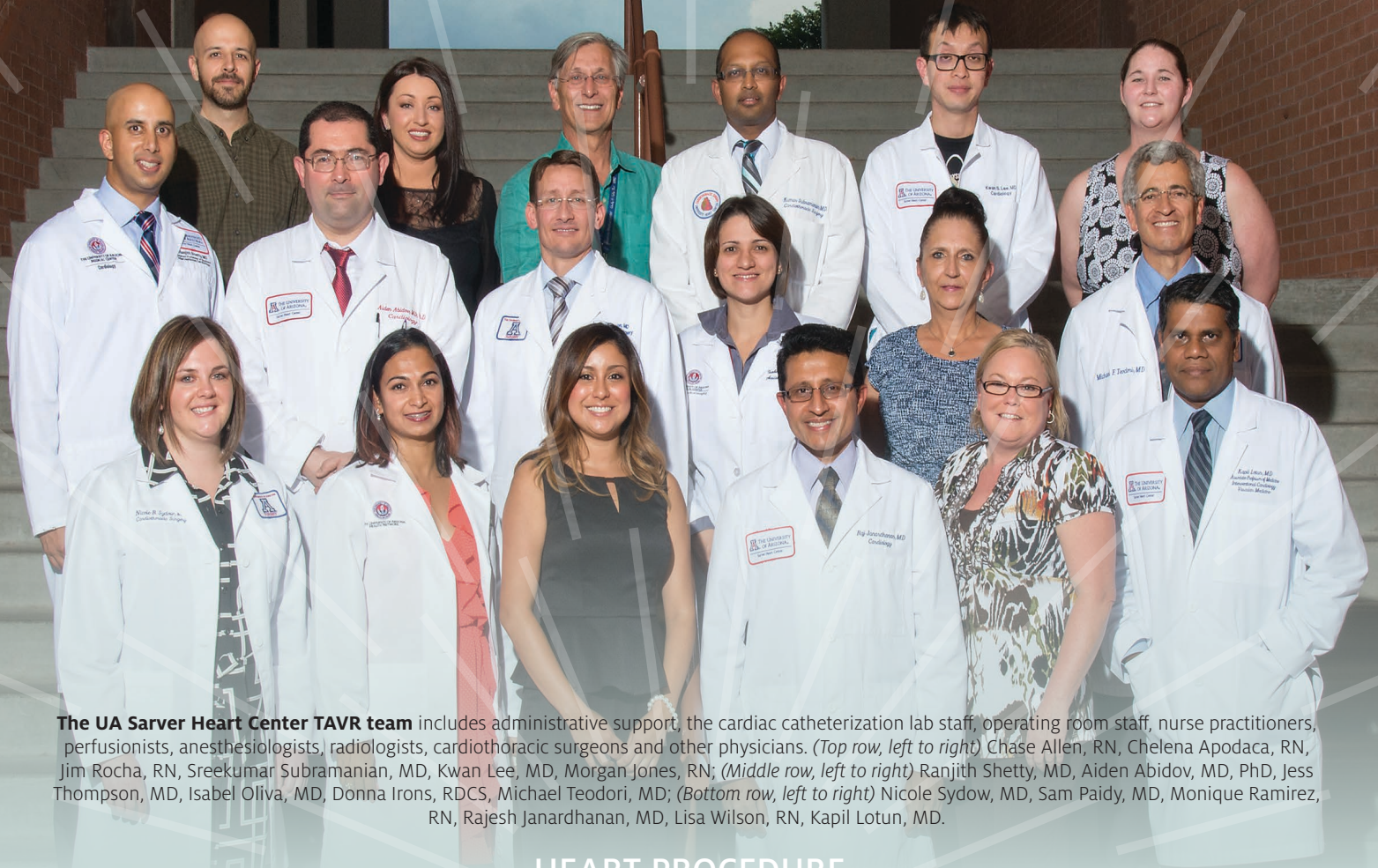


THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
MEDICAL CENTER  
Cardiology

THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ARIZONA  
Sarver Heart Center

Nancy K. Sweitzer, M.D., Ph.D.





**The UA Sarver Heart Center TAVR team** includes administrative support, the cardiac catheterization lab staff, operating room staff, nurse practitioners, perfusionists, anesthesiologists, radiologists, cardiothoracic surgeons and other physicians. (Top row, left to right) Chase Allen, RN, Chelena Apodaca, RN, Jim Rocha, RN, Sreekumar Subramanian, MD, Kwan Lee, MD, Morgan Jones, RN; (Middle row, left to right) Ranjith Shetty, MD, Aiden Abidov, MD, PhD, Jess Thompson, MD, Isabel Oliva, MD, Donna Irons, RDCS, Michael Teodori, MD; (Bottom row, left to right) Nicole Sydow, MD, Sam Paidy, MD, Monique Ramirez, RN, Rajesh Janardhanan, MD, Lisa Wilson, RN, Kapil Lotun, MD.

## HEART PROCEDURE UPDATES

### TAVR PROGRAM CELEBRATES TWO YEARS OF IMPROVING PATIENTS' LIVES

The Trans-catheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) Program at the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center celebrated its second anniversary with a dinner for patients and referring physicians in September. The TAVR procedure is a minimally invasive catheter-based treatment option for patients who are considered too ill to survive open-heart surgery to replace aortic valves affected by severe aortic stenosis. In this condition, the valve does not open properly and blood cannot leave the heart chambers to get out to the rest of the body.

"We have completed a total of 64 cases with the vast majority having positive outcomes as illustrated by the patient stories we heard," said Kapil Lotun, MD, associate professor of medicine and director of the Structural Heart Disease Program and Vascular Medicine in Cardiology. "The credit goes to our TAVR team, which includes administrative support, the cardiac catheterization lab, operating room staff,

nurse practitioners, perfusionists and other physicians."

"With new up-and-coming technologies our cardiology division, in collaboration with the entire heart team, we will be expanding current programs and starting new programs to treat heart valve and other heart problems less invasively. This will increase our ability to help more people in the community," added Dr. Lotun.

One new technology is the CoreValve, a design that has a broader range of aortic valve sizes. This will allow interventional cardiologists to treat a wider patient population at the University of Arizona Medical Center – University Campus. The MitralClip is another option for patients with leaking mitral valves who are at high surgical risk for traditional mitral valve replacement or repair. "This special patient population now has the option of receiving treatment here in Tucson via minimally invasive techniques," said Dr. Lotun.



## HERE ARE SOME PHOTOS FROM THE CELEBRATION DINNER

### Back to Gardening –

**Wynema Schwarz's** cardiologist referred her to the TAVR program two years ago as a last resort. Pictured with her son, Tyron Schwarz, her energy and strength have returned and she is back to gardening at age 82.



### From Hospital to Karaoke –

**Billie Jo Harris** (right), originally diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), came to the UA cardiology practice for a second opinion and learned she had a valve condition that qualified her for the TAVR procedure. Now, she and her husband, Bobbie Harris, enjoy belting out Karaoke tunes and singing in the church choir. "We went to a Karaoke party the Thursday after my hospital discharge," said Mrs. Harris. An 83-year-old composer and songwriter, one of her songs was selected to be part of their church's Christmas music this year.



### Back to Globetrotting -

**Benjamin Herman, PhD**, had his first valve replacement with triple bypass surgery in 2003. A retired professor and chairman of the UA Atmospheric Sciences Program, he is an avid traveler and iris aficionado who visited Australia in 2013 to attend an iris convention and watch the penguin parade. During the parade, he felt dizzy and passed out. When he returned home, Samir Dahdal, MD, cardiologist and clinical assistant professor of medicine, evaluated Mr. Herman who was approved for TAVR instead of open-heart surgery. "Since then, I have attended the iris convention in Victoria, Canada, and a global-warming conference in New York," said Mr. Herman, who presented special iris bulbs to Monique Ramirez, RN, BSN, TAVR clinical coordinator.



### Ready to Travel - When Betty Hupp

(age 85) woke up following her TAVR procedure, she told her daughter, "I feel fantastic. Let's go on a trip." Another family member's illness has turned her into a caregiver and delayed her travel plans, but she intends to go traveling once the situation improves. "It's a pleasure to have this team on our side. I have a new life," said Mrs. Hupp, pictured with Kapil Lotun, MD, associate professor and director of the Structural Heart Disease Program and Vascular Medicine in Cardiology.







## SARVER HEART CENTER RECOGNITIONS

**Heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF)** is a major health care problem with no treatment proven to improve long-term outcomes. “Heart failure with preserved ejection fraction represents half of all heart failure hospital admissions. With this condition, which disproportionately affects women, we don’t have a good understanding of the mechanisms that lead to the disease and we essentially treat related conditions, such as lowering high blood pressure,” said **Elizabeth Juneman, MD**, associate professor of medicine. The primary symptom of the disease is severe shortness of breath with mild exertion, despite a heart muscle that seems to pump normally on heart imaging studies.

**Henk Granzier, PhD, professor of cellular and molecular medicine (center), is leading a new National Institutes of Health grant, in collaboration with UA faculty cardiologists Steve Goldman, MD, professor of medicine (right), and Dr. Juneman (left).** Martin M. LeWinter, MD, professor of medicine at the University of Vermont College of Medicine is a co-principal investigator on the federal NIH grant titled, “Myofilament-based mechanisms of diastolic dysfunction in HFpEF” (1R01HL118524), totaling \$2.46 million over four years. The Sarver Heart Center cardiologists practice at

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System.

Most HFpEF patients have a history of hypertension and concentric left ventricular (LV) remodeling, a combination referred to as “hypertensive heart disease.” The vast majority of HFpEF patients also have LV diastolic dysfunction, resulting from increased chamber stiffness. This project will study changes at the level of the myofilament in heart cells that contribute to diastolic dysfunction (abnormal heart relaxation) using biopsies of heart muscle obtained during heart surgeries. The researchers will compare patients with hypertensive heart disease who either have symptoms of heart failure (shortness of breath, swelling) or no symptoms, and will run parallel studies with laboratory models of the disease.

“Dr. Juneman made a heroic effort to obtain VA approval for this research protocol. The biopsies obtained during surgeries with patient consent will provide valuable and unique data,” said Professor Granzier.

“This grant shows one of the values of the Sarver Heart Center. It fosters collaboration where basic and clinical scientists are able to work together on a project to decipher the primary cause of disease and improve patient care,” said Dr. Goldman.



During the past few months, **Karl B. Kern, MD**, (right, pictured with Daniel V. Schidlow, MD, Drexel University senior vice president of medical affairs and dean) has received several well-deserved recognitions. Dr. Kern, co-director of the UA Sarver Heart Center and professor of medicine, received the **Lifetime Achievement Award from Drexel University College of Medicine's Alumni Association** in May. A 1980

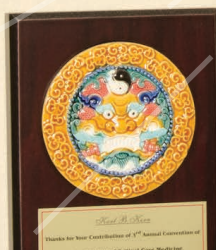
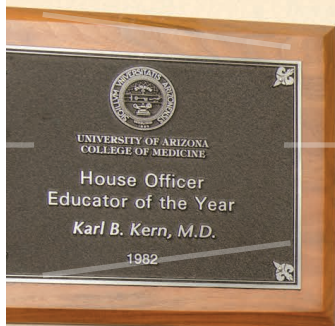
graduate of the Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia (now Drexel School of Medicine), he was recognized for outstanding achievements and making lasting contributions, in particular his research that led to cardio-cerebral resuscitation and his mentoring of future physicians and scientists.

**Dr. Kern also was inducted as an honorary member of the European Resuscitation Council** during its scientific conference in Bilbao, Spain, in May. Honorary members are recognized for outstanding merit and life-long commitment and leadership in resuscitation care. The ERC described Dr. Kern as "one of the most influential leaders in resuscitation over many years. (His research) is renowned not only for the originality and excellence of its published work, but also for its refreshing willingness to challenge dogma where good grounds have existed for doubt about current practice." The ERC has recognized only 40 honorary members worldwide. Dr. Kern is one of 10 from the United States.

The Sarver Heart Center Resuscitation Research Group's

success in improving long-term survival from sudden cardiac arrest by introducing chest-compression-only CPR and cardio-cerebral resuscitation for emergency responders is well known. Post-resuscitation care in hospitals offers the next great opportunity to further improve survival. **Dr. Kern recently was awarded an Arizona Biomedical Investigator Grant (AZ BIG)** from the Arizona Department of Health Services to study whether early coronary angiography is effective for cardiac arrest patients who have not had a classic heart attack with ST elevation, a measurement that indicates a severe blood-flow blockage. Some believe all post-cardiac-arrest patients should have emergent coronary angiography, but others disagree.

This clinical study will evaluate early angiographic treatment in a multi-centered randomized study of 240 patients resuscitated from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. Dr. Kern is collaborating with doctors from University of Arizona Medical Center – University and South Campuses, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, Maine Medical Center, Vanderbilt University Medical Center and Minneapolis Heart Institute. Dr. Kern and others have already demonstrated improved survival in non-randomized, cohort studies. This grant will be the first to support a prospective, randomized trial to examine the benefit of this early angiographic approach in patients without ST elevation.







In September, **Dr. Nancy Sweitzer was recognized as one of the 50 most influential women in Arizona by Arizona Business Magazine.** “This award is recognition not only of the uniqueness of having a woman leader in cardiovascular medicine, but also of the importance of the work being done at the Sarver Heart Center to prevent, treat and cure heart disease and stroke,” said Dr. Sweitzer, director of the UA Sarver Heart Center.

In November, Dr. Sweitzer delivered two presentations for the Arizona Health Sciences community. One, for Women in Academic Medicine was titled, **“Dreaming the Possible Dream: Overcoming Barriers and Being a Leader.”** She was joined by other women faculty members of the Sarver Heart Center. (Pictured from left: Heddwen Brooks, PhD, Betsy Dokken, NP, PhD, Dr. Sweitzer, and Margaret Briehl, PhD.) Dr. Sweitzer also delivered a continuing medical education talk for the UA College of Medicine – Tucson homecoming program titled, **“Great Problems of Nature: Progress in Mechanical Circulatory Support as a Treatment for Advanced Heart Disease.”**



**Former Sarver Heart Center Investigator Award recipient Dennis Pollow, Jr., MS, RD, received a predoctoral fellowship grant from the American Heart Association Western States Affiliate** to continue his research on “Sex differences in T-cell-mediated regulation of blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.” The Sarver Heart Center **Heart Disease in Women Award** enabled Dennis to obtain preliminary research data to compete for this national award. His mentor is Sarver Heart Center faculty member **Heddwen Brooks, PhD**, associate professor of physiology and chair of the Physiological Sciences Graduate Interdisciplinary Program.



**Zain Khalpey, MD, PhD, MRCS, was selected by the International Society for Cardiovascular Translational Research to be the recipient of the 2014 ISCTR Cardiovascular Translational Research Scholarship.** Dr.

Khalpey, associate professor, UA Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, currently serves as the co-director of Heart Transplant and director of the Mechanical Circulatory Support Program. Dr. Khalpey’s research focuses on stem-cell applications in transplantation and cardiothoracic surgery. The ISCTR’s translational research curriculum is designed to help clinicians and scientists learn about new pathways for medical product development that can expedite scientific advancements to benefit patients.



**Marvin J. Slepian, MD**, professor of medicine and biomedical engineering and McGuire Scholar in the Eller College of Management, is **president-elect of the International Society for Rotary Blood Pumps.** The society, which will be renamed the



International Society of Mechanical Circulatory Support, will hold its 26th meeting in Tucson in 2016, with Dr. Slepian serving as program chair and president of the society. "This will be a great opportunity for Tucson and the UA as well. This meeting will bring to town an international concentration of leading cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, engineers, coagulation/hematologists, industry personnel, health administrators, and venture capitalists," said Dr. Slepian.



**Ankit Desai, MD**, assistant professor of clinical medicine, has been selected for an Arizona Health Sciences Center Career Development Award, which provides funding to support physicians and scientists across disciplines to develop a research project in an established investigator's laboratory or program. The goal is to provide young physician scientists time and resources to begin a productive research career and successfully compete for national biomedical funding, such as the National Institutes of Health and American Heart Association awards. The AHSC awards are granted for up to two years at up to \$75,000 per year and portions can be applied to salary, lab supplies, tuition, fees and travel to academic conferences.

Dr. Desai's mentors for his project, "Sudden Death and Sickle Cell Disease – An Electrophysiological and Molecular Investigation," are **Joe G.N. "Skip" Garcia, MD**, senior vice president for health sciences, and **Jason Yuan, MD, PhD**, associate vice president for translational health sciences, at the Arizona Health Sciences Center.

## Heart Failure: Asking Big Questions. Finding Better Answers.

The rich and diverse collaborative environment that exists at the University of Arizona is impressive, and I am working to increase opportunities for translational science around heart failure. Our talented group of physicians and scientists has several opportunities to work together in pursuit of solutions to big questions that will ultimately lead to better care for heart failure patients.

Here are some of the initiatives I am pursuing with colleagues:

- Work to increase precise, personalized identification of patients at risk for heart failure, and those likely to benefit from particular therapies, in collaboration with **Kenneth Ramos, MD, PhD, PharmB**, an internationally recognized expert who is the associate vice president for precision health sciences at the Arizona Health Sciences Center (AHSC). This collaboration takes advantage of my prior work in heart failure genetics, including published work about a gene associated with risk of heart failure development (risk allele).
- In collaboration with **Lee Ryan, PhD**, associate director; **Elizabeth Glisky, PhD**, head of the Department of Psychology; **Carol Barnes, PhD**, director, and other investigators in the **McKnight Brain Institute** at the UA, we will be looking at the relationship between inflammatory brain changes and cognition, mood and memory in patients with heart failure.
- Further exploring the potential role of brain inflammation in heart failure, I am working with physiologists **John Konhilas, PhD**, and **Meredith Hay, PhD**, to investigate the immune mechanisms of brain inflammation in heart failure, both in animal models and in patients, and exploring the possibility that pro-biotic therapy and changes in the microbiota of the gut may positively affect both brain and systemic inflammation, memory, mood and cognition.
- In close collaboration with **Carol Gregorio, PhD**, co-director of the UA Sarver Heart Center, I am connecting our internationally known basic scientists studying heart muscle proteins and diseases with collaborators in drug development to identify and smartly develop drug therapies targeted at specific cell proteins and mechanisms identified in laboratories at the University of Arizona.
- I am collaborating with **Elizabeth Calhoun, PhD, MEd**, associate vice president for population health sciences and executive director of the **Center for Population Science and Discovery** at AHSC, to develop projects that take advantage of the unprecedented opportunity to study underserved minority populations. Our goal is to learn more about cardiovascular disease risk in our rural and urban minority and non-minority populations, and ways we might work to improve health disparities and reduce cardiovascular risk in those minority populations with the highest risk. One unique way we might target this is by studying both individual, cultural and community factors that alter the gut microbiota, and the association of this with inflammation and cardiovascular risk.

*Dr. Sweitzer is an advanced heart failure and transplant cardiologist and clinical researcher, specializing in heart failure, mechanical circulatory support and heart transplant patient care.*





Celebrating the Governor's Volunteer Service Award - (From left) Nancy K. Sweitzer, MD, PhD, Lori Mackstaller, MD, Darrell Bakeman, Wanda Moore, Aubra Gaston, and Cheryl Alli.

## COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATE

**Wanda F. Moore received the Governor's Volunteer Services Award** in April. Wanda serves as a member of the Sarver Heart Center Advisory Board, Women's Heart Health Education Committee, and chairs its Community Coalition for Heart Health Education for Women of Color (CCHHE). Through her dedicated leadership, thousands of people in Arizona, particularly in African-, Native- and Hispanic-American communities, are more aware of their heart disease risk and overall health. Wanda also produced a video to educate people about CPR disparities in African-American communities (visit [heart.arizona.edu](http://heart.arizona.edu) to view it). The CCHHE has taught chest-compression-only CPR to more than 2,400 people in Arizona. "Wanda shares her passion to make a difference in the health of minority communities by building connections between those communities, corporations, and our physicians and scientists," said **Nancy K. Sweitzer, MD, PhD**, director of the UA Sarver Heart Center.



**The Steven M. Gootter Foundation** presented six automated external defibrillators (AEDs) to the Marana Police Department, 50 AEDs to the Tucson Police Department and 26 to the Pima County Sheriff's Department during the past several months. "Police officers are often first on the scene when a cardiac event is reported. Although one can never predict when and where a sudden cardiac event will occur, by placing AEDs in patrol cars with officers who have been trained on how to use these devices, there is a greater chance the sudden cardiac arrest victim can be saved," said Andrew Messing, president of the Gootter Foundation and Sarver Heart Center advisory board member.



From left: Marana Police Chief Terry Rozema, Marana Sgt. Chris Warren, Claudine Messing, Andrew Messing, Paulette Gootter, Joe Gootter, Joyce Barkley, and Marana Sgt. Steve Johnson, with the automated external defibrillators (AEDs) that were donated by the Steven M. Gootter Foundation to the Marana Police Department.

Terence Valenzuela, MD (left), UA emergency medicine professor and medical director for the Tucson Fire Department, presented a \$5,000 check to **University Emergency Medical Services students, the winners of the Tucson HeartMap Challenge AED scavenger hunt.** The University EMS 48-member group discovered 182 AEDs during the scavenger hunt in September. The aim was to raise awareness about AEDs and create a database of all AED locations in Pima County. The University EMS group regularly volunteers at Sarver Heart Center to teach chest-compression-only CPR to community and UA campus groups and do blood-pressure screenings at outreach programs. They plan to use the \$5,000 to support their club activities. Also pictured: University EMS leaders and Sarver Heart Center volunteers Matt Darrow (center) and Joey Menke.



**Celebrating 10 Years of Focusing on Women and Heart Disease** – The Sarver Heart Center Women's Heart Health Education Committee is celebrating 10 years of education and research focused on women and heart disease. Wanda F. Moore (left), chair of the Minority Outreach Program, and Mary Anne Fay, chair of the women's committee, prepare to cut a celebratory cake following the committee meeting in September.

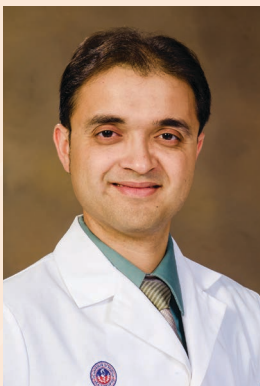




# MEMBER UPDATES

## Welcome New Faculty

The University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center and UA College of Medicine — Tucson welcomed new cardiologists and cardiothoracic surgeons.



**Ankit Desai, MD**, is an assistant professor of clinical medicine. Board certified in internal medicine and cardiology, Dr. Desai is a physician-scientist whose research on cardiovascular disparities in minorities with heart failure and pulmonary hypertension is funded by the National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association Mentored Clinical and Population Research Award. Dr. Desai's lab uses

cardiac imaging, genomic and molecular biology approaches to develop personalized treatment of pulmonary hypertension and associated heart failure.

Previously, Dr. Desai was an assistant professor of clinical medicine at the University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System. He completed medical school at the University of Illinois at Chicago – College of Medicine, internal medicine residency at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco, and his cardiology fellowship at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

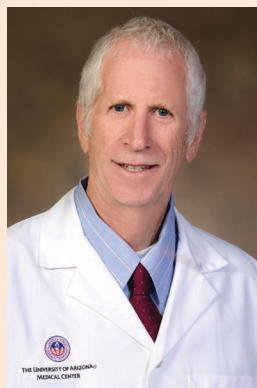


**Vijay Doraiswamy, MD**, is an assistant professor of medicine. He is board certified in internal medicine and adult echocardiography.

Dr. Doraiswamy completed medical school at Madras Medical College in Chennai, India, and served as senior house officer in emergency medicine at the Sundaram Medical Foundation in India. He started his residency in internal medicine

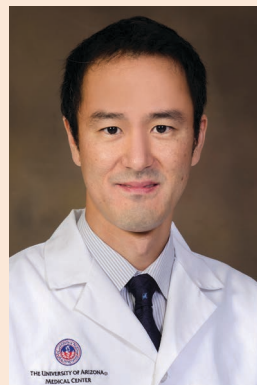
at Western Pennsylvania Hospital at Temple University in Pittsburgh, worked as a research assistant in the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, then completed his internal medicine residency at the University of Arizona. He received the Norma J. Peal, PhD, Excellence in Graduate Medical Education Resident Award for his

contribution to education and serving the underserved during his residency.



**Charles Katzenberg, MD**, is a clinical professor of medicine and a board-certified cardiologist who practices at University of Arizona Medical Center's North Hills Physician Offices. He completed medical school at the University of Illinois — Chicago. He then was an intern and resident in internal medicine as well as a chest disease fellow at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago. His fellowship in cardiovascular medicine was completed at UA College of Medicine in 1982. He went into private practice as co-founder of Pima Heart Associates.

A member of the American Society for Preventative Cardiology, Dr. Katzenberg created the HEART Series, an extensive cardiac rehabilitation program that teaches people how to choose heart healthy lifestyles to prevent and treat coronary heart disease. For more information, visit [heartseries.org](http://heartseries.org).

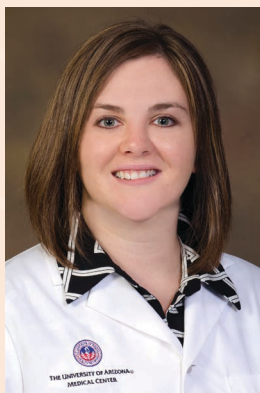


**Toshinobu Kazui, MD, PhD**, joined the UA Department of Surgery as clinical instructor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. He completed an advanced surgical fellowship with a focus on heart failure, heart transplant, ventricular assist devices and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) procedures at Washington University in St. Louis/ Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

Dr. Kazui specializes in the research and surgical treatment of advanced heart disease, heart transplantation, mechanical circulatory and assist devices, mitral valve disease and coronary artery bypass grafting. He received his medical degree from Sapporo Medical University School of Medicine and his PhD



from Iwate Medical University in Japan. He completed his residency training at Memorial Heart Center, Iwate Medical University, where he also served as assistant professor of cardiovascular surgery. He has earned multiple national and regional grants and awards in his research activities, which focus on translational advanced heart disease surgical and imaging technologies to improve perioperative cardiac function.



**Nicole R. Sydow, MD**, joined the UA Department of Surgery as clinical instructor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. She joined the department after completing an advanced cardiothoracic surgery fellowship at the UA. She completed general surgery residency training at the Cleveland Clinic and earned her medical degree from Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

Dr. Sydow has a special interest in the treatment of aortic valve disease, including coronary artery bypass grafting, minimally invasive aortic valve replacement, aortic surgery and transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) procedures. TAVR provides a treatment option for many patients who are too frail to undergo open heart surgery for aortic valve stenosis. Her clinical research interests include extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) and adult cardiac surgery outcomes.

**To make an appointment with a cardiologist, please call 520-694-4000; for a cardiothoracic surgeon, 520-626-7806.**

## Message from Our New Development Director

Dear friends and generous supporters of the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center:

I am humbled and honored to join the staff of such an incredible academic medical institution like the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center. As a long-time Tucsonan and someone whose family has been touched by cardiac disease, I personally know the value of the achievements of this center. I have witnessed, with great hope and pride, the transformation from a virtual center to a destination for patients, residents, healthcare professionals, and basic and clinical scientists.



I never dreamed one day I would be part of such a remarkable team of professionals. You would think the task of writing down my feelings would be easy. It isn't, but here it goes.

To my colleagues at the UA Sarver Heart Center, I say thank you. You make my job a joy just to be here, but more importantly you make it even more enjoyable because of who you are and what you do every day. Your dedication and commitment to the mission of the UA Sarver Heart Center set the bar high for other units on campus and indeed around the nation. Thank you.

Dr. Sweitzer, Kalidas Madhavpeddi, and the dedicated and passionate members of the search committee and the advisory board of the UA Sarver Heart Center, thank you for placing your trust in me. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you to continue the Sarver Heart Center's journey of discovery, excellence, and providing cutting-edge patient care. The ubiquitous phrase 'standing on the shoulders of those who came before' is not lost on me. I will work every day to continue the tradition of professionalism and commitment set by my predecessors.

And to you, the generous people whose gifts have made the UA Sarver Heart Center what it is today, I want to say two things. Thank you for the lives you save everyday through your philanthropy. And, I promise to do everything I can to help you fulfill your dream of a *Future Free of Heart Disease and Stroke*.

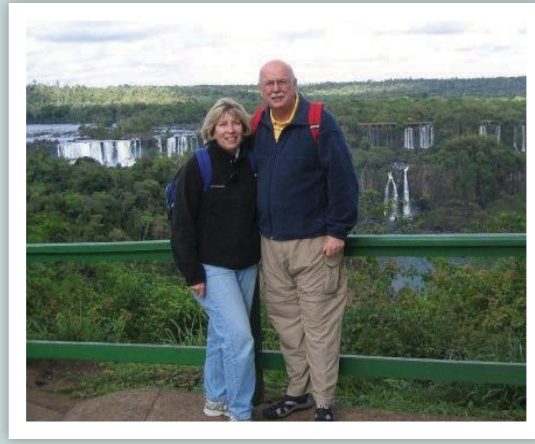
This part of the journey has begun. I invite you to continue with us down this path – where the promise of new life-changing clinical breakthroughs and bench-to-bedside discoveries are made possible, all while training the next generation of basic researchers and physician scientists. **With your continued commitment, support and advocacy, together we'll make all of this possible.**

**Thom Melendez**  
UA Sarver Heart Center Director of Development

# SAYING GOODBYE AND CELEBRATING LIFE



The family and friends of James “Jim” A. Mather found themselves unexpectedly saying goodbye to a loved one, and at the same time celebrating a life that was well lived. Jim received a law degree and MBA in accounting from the University of Arizona. Although he and his wife, Karin, of 43½ years called Tucson home, it was more of a base for adventure. The Mathers were world travelers! Jim had been around the world twice and Karin has been around the world once. They enjoyed so many places, including Europe, Africa, and China, just to name a few.



Karin and Jim Mather during one of their travel adventures. A stroke that occurred in Amsterdam claimed Jim’s life. The family requested donations to UA Sarver Heart Center in his memory.

Karin said their favorite memories were seeing the animals in Africa and the beautiful scenery of Switzerland. Jim also took two trips to China to volunteer to teach English and two to tour the country itself. While their daughters were in high school, Jim and Karin also took groups of students on tours around Europe.

Sadly, it was on one of these trips that Jim passed away unexpectedly. As Jim and Karin were starting a river cruise in Amsterdam, he suffered a massive stroke and collapsed.

He was taken to an Amsterdam hospital where he received wonderful treatment, but was never able to overcome the stroke. He passed away with his wife at his side.

In Jim Mather’s memory, his family chose to have donations sent to the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center and another charity. The memory of this adventure-loving man will be honored as UA Sarver Heart Center researchers continue working toward their vision of a future free of heart disease and stroke so others can live to experience their own adventures.

Karin has a long list of things she wants her husband to be remembered for: his honesty, his easy-going and fair nature, and that he was very well loved by all. “We donated his corneas; he’s still seeing the world through someone else’s eyes,” said Karin.

Our hearts go out to all the friends and family of Jim A. Mather. We are grateful for their friendship and their generosity in support of the UA Sarver Heart Center.



## Remembering the Ones We have Lost.

Gary and Sharon Stephens remember their daughter, Heather Stephens, each year by giving to the Sarver Heart Center. In her daughter’s memory, Mrs. Stephens encourages people to take care of their hearts. “You only get one heart, and it’s a gift.” Their daughter had been a heart transplant patient.

## Sarver Heart Center Tribute Cards Available.

The UA Sarver Heart Center is grateful for the number of people who generously support our vision of a future free of heart disease and stroke by using our tribute cards to honor or remember the life of someone special to them. We have tribute remittance cards available that make such gifts easy. Each packet includes cards that read either “In Memory Of” or “In Honor Of” that you could send to people to let them know you are making a gift in their names. The packets also include a remittance card that you would complete and send to Sarver Heart Center with your donation. When we receive the remittance card and gift from you, we will send an acknowledgment letter to your honoree or their loved ones. To receive a free supply, please call 520-626-4146 or email [heart@u.arizona.edu](mailto:heart@u.arizona.edu).







# HEART SMART

## Movie at the Loft Cinema Promotes Heart Health Education

The UA Sarver Heart Center Women's Heart Health Education Committee celebrated its 10th anniversary with a new type of program in October. Instead of the traditional luncheon, the committee organized a panel discussion and

special screening of the movie, "Fed Up" at the Loft Cinema in Tucson, led by program chair Sandy Katz, MD, JD.

The project inspired Sarver Heart Center physicians and staff to consider changes in the way we all eat in order to reduce sugar hidden in many processed food items. "In planning a photo for our promotional materials, we pulled various items out of the refrigerators around Sarver Heart Center and were astonished by the amounts of sugar," said Nancy Sweitzer, MD, PhD, director of the UA Sarver Heart Center, who moderated the panel discussion that included Victoria Maizes, MD, executive director of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, and Maia Ingram, MPH, deputy director of Community-based Evaluation Projects at the UA Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health.

"While the World Health Organization recommends an intake of 20-25 grams of sugar daily, there is no percent recommended

**How much hidden sugar is in your food?**

The average American adult consumes about 22 teaspoons of sugar each day (88 grams). These "healthy" foods total 67.7 grams or 14.4 teaspoons.

daily allowance of sugar on labels, in contrast to almost all other types of food nutrients," said Dr. Sweitzer. **Here are some ideas for reducing sugar in your foods:**

- Read labels to look for sugar content.
- Swap flavored yogurt (24 grams of sugar) for low-fat, plain yogurt (9 grams) and add whole fruit chunks (lower sugar in grams, plus beneficial fiber to help that sugar enter the body more slowly).
- Swap sweetened beverages (55 grams) for water (0 grams).
- Cook more whole foods and refrigerate/freeze leftovers to replace pre-packaged frozen meals.
- Mix oil, vinegar and herbs instead of using packaged salad dressing.
- Shop at farmers' markets to buy more fresh, high fiber, locally-grown foods.
- Move toward a plant-based diet and run away from the SAD (Standard American Diet) – heavy in refined and processed foods, dairy and animal products; light in fruits and vegetables.





# Green Valley

Lecture Series . . . . . 2014 – 2015

**Each lecture is 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.  
at Canoa Hills Social Center,  
3660 S. Camino del Sol, Green Valley.**

- Dec. 18** **Getting to the Heart of Good Food.** Charles Katzenberg, MD, clinical professor of medicine at the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center, encourages his patients to walk toward a plant-based diet and run away from the SAD (Standard American Diet).
- Jan. 15** **Confused by the Latest Heart News? Sort it out here.** Lori Mackstaller, MD, associate professor of clinical medicine and the Edwin J. Brach Foundation/Hazel and Bertram Brodie Endowed Lecturer for Heart Disease in Women at the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center, provides an update on recent heart health news and recommends questions you should discuss with your doctor.
- Feb. 19** **Going with the Flow: Catheter-based Therapy for Your Heart.** Hoang Thai, MD, associate professor of medicine and chief of cardiology at Southern Arizona Veteran's Health Care System, explains how new heart procedures enable cardiologists to bypass the surgery suite to open arterial blood flow and repair heart valves using catheters vs. open-heart surgery.
- March 19** **An Update on Options for Treating Atrial Fibrillation.** Peter Ott, MD, associate professor of clinical medicine and the Peter Ott, MD Endowed Chair of Electrophysiology at the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center, discusses stroke prevention, determining the right anti-coagulation medicine for you and new options for patients who can't tolerate anti-coagulants.

**For more information, please visit the "Events" section on the UA Sarver Heart Center website: [heart.arizona.edu](http://heart.arizona.edu).**

Treat Yourself to

**Healthy  
Heart  
Day  
2015**

**Join us Saturday, Feb. 7**  
at the Arizona Health Sciences Center in Tucson for an interactive day focused on preventing heart disease and stroke and living healthy with cardiovascular disease. Health screenings, light breakfast, tai chi, laughter yoga, nutrition information, heart-health updates and a healthy lunch are just some of what we'll offer – a great value at \$35 per person. Check our website for more details and registration information – [heart.arizona.edu](http://heart.arizona.edu) or call 520-626-4146.