

NIH Community College Day
Natcher Conference Center
Friday, October 1, 2010
Speaker Biosketches

Erika L. Barr, PhD

Co-Director, Community College Summer Enrichment Program
Office of Intramural Training & Education/NIH
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Dr. Barr, a native of North Carolina, received her Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees in Biology from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. Following, her undergraduate studies, she taught 6th grade science for the North Carolina public school system. In addition, to teaching she served as an assistant coordinator for the Greensboro Area Math and Science Education Center (GAMSEC). The purpose of GAMSEC was to improve the math and science skills of middle and high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. Moreover, there was an emphasis in encouraging the students to pursue an undergraduate degree in a STEM discipline. After receiving her PhD in Biology, Erika completed two postdoctoral fellowships at the Medical Research Council-London School of Hygiene and Tropical Disease in The Gambia, West Africa and at the National Institutes on Aging in Baltimore, MD. Currently, Dr. Barr is the co-director for the Community College Summer Enrichment Program in the Office of Intramural Training & Education. Dr. Barr has a passion for increasing the number of underrepresented individuals in the biomedical sciences.

Carla Easter, PhD

Science Education Specialist
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Dr. Easter is the Education Specialist with the Education and Community Involvement Branch of the National Human Genome Research Institute. From 2003 to 2006, she was Director of Outreach for Washington University School of Medicine's Genome Sequencing Center in St. Louis, MO. Before assuming her role as Outreach Director, Dr. Easter was a Research Associate in the Department of Education at Washington University (2001-2003). She served as Project Associate for the Quality Education for Minorities Network and Pre-College Coordinator for the NASA Summer High School Apprenticeship Research Plus Program (2000-2001). From 1997-2000, Dr. Easter conducted postdoctoral research at Washington University School of Medicine on the virulence factors associated with *Streptococcus pyogenes*, a gram positive bacterium that can cause a wide range of potentially life-threatening infections. Dr. Easter earned her BS degree in Microbiology from the University of California, Los Angeles and her PhD in Biology with an emphasis on Molecular Genetics from the University of California, San Diego.

William A. Gahl, MD, PhD

Clinical Director
Director of IRP Office of Rare Diseases
Director of the NIH Undiagnosed Diseases Program
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Dr. Gahl received his undergraduate degree from MIT in 1972 and his MD and PhD from the University of Wisconsin. He completed a residency in pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin and a postdoctoral fellowship in genetics at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Gahl is certified in Pediatrics, Clinical Genetics, and Clinical Biochemical Genetics. He is a past member of the Board of Directors of the American Board of Medical Genetics, past president of the Society for Inherited Metabolic Disorders, and a member of the Association of American Physicians. Dr. Gahl is an international expert in cystinosis, Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome, alkaptonuria, and disorders of free sialic acid metabolism. He is currently Clinical Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, director of the intramural program of the Office of Rare Diseases, and Director of the NIH Undiagnosed Diseases Program.

Zakaria Ganiyu, CPhT

(CPhT= Certified Pharmacy Technician)

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Mr. Ganiyu is a purchasing agent/pharmacy technician at the NIH Clinical Center pharmacy. He received his Bachelor of Science in Public Health at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is currently pursuing dual masters degrees in Project Management and Business Administration. In addition to working at NIH full time and taking a graduate course, he teaches a pharmacy technician course at Fortis College in Landover, Maryland.

Ashutosh Gupta

Pre-Doctoral Fellow

National Cancer Institute/NIH

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Mr. Gupta is a physics PhD student at University of Maryland, College Park, and is currently working on applied physics problems in cancer biophysics at NCI, Bethesda. His interest in science started at an early age. In India, he ranked 56th out of 600,000 in the Secondary Examination, and later joined the Indian Institute of Technology (India's premier engineering institute with acceptance rate <4%) for his Bachelors and Masters degree. He received prestigious J.C. Ghosh Scholarship and Arunabha Chatterjee Scholarship given to the top student at the beginning of the final year of Bachelors and Masters program at IIT, Kharagpur. His research projects have spanned several fields including fiber optics, liquid crystals, organic semi-conductors, methanol masers (astronomy), chemical engineering, electronics, cryogenics, abstract mathematics and computing. His thesis research is on "Biological Control of Noise" where he is trying to understand, from multiple perspectives, how cells in our body control and integrate the variety of random signals they receive from the internal and external environment. He has received several awards in fields as diverse as painting, music, dance, clay and thermocol modeling, dramatics, debate, sports, leadership, and social services.

Michelle Renée Johnson Hamlet, PhD

Training Program Coordinator

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Dr. Hamlet joined the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) as the first Training Program Coordinator for the Intramural Training Office in June 2006. She is

involved in developing training programs for undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate trainees within the NHGRI Division of Intramural Research. Her particular interest is in increasing the participation of trainees from underrepresented groups in genetics and genomics research. Most recently she developed and launched the first NHGRI Division of Intramural Research Health Disparities Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. Additionally, she established the first partnership between NHGRI and Prince George's Community College's Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Collegian Center. Dr. Hamlet also is responsible for NHGRI's participation in the Washington Internship for Native Students program, which provides internship opportunities for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students. Dr. Hamlet represents NHGRI in trans-NIH intramural training initiatives as well. For example, she initiated a collaborative project with the NIH-wide Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) to provide more training opportunities for local community college students. Dr. Hamlet received a Bachelor of Science in language arts in French with a minor in biology at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. She received a master's in Zoology from Howard University in Washington, D.C, and a PhD in cell and developmental biology from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

William J. Higgins, PhD

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Dr. Higgins, an Associate Professor in Biology, has spent 37 years as a faculty member at the University of Maryland. He teaches Physiology and Organismal Biology, directs two online courses for high school teachers in the Master of Chemical and Life Sciences Program, and serves as an advisor in the OITE at NIH. Dr. Higgins spent 17 years in various administrative positions at Maryland, is an academic advisor for more than 100 undergraduates per semester, and served as the major advisor and/or Thesis Chair for 10 PhD students, 21 MS students, and 7 undergraduate honors and individual studies students. He received a BS in biology from Boston College and a PhD in physiology from Florida State University.

Regina Smith James, MD

Director, Division of Special Populations
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Regina Smith James, MD, serves as the Director of the Division of Special Populations at the NICHD. In this capacity, she is responsible for informing the public on health disparity issues; developing initiatives that serve to encourage, facilitate, and increase participation of diverse populations and developing nations in biomedical and behavioral research endeavors; and developing research and scientific leadership in colleges and universities worldwide. Dr. James is a child and adolescent psychiatrist who graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Medicine and received her clinical training in adult and pediatric psychiatry at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Ohio. Prior to her appointment at the NICHD, Dr. James served as the chief of the Pediatric Eating Disorders Program, Attention Disorders Program and Mood Disorders Program at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). She served two years as a clinical associate in the Child Psychiatry Branch at NIMH, where she conducted clinical trials research. Dr. James has conducted and published clinical research in the areas of health disparities, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Pediatric Bipolar Disorder.

She is the recipient of The Rieger Award for Scientific Achievement, given by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Jackie A. Lavigne, PhD, MPH

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Dr. Lavigne received her bachelor's degree from Colby College in Waterville, ME. She then earned a PhD in molecular toxicology and an MPH with a concentration in epidemiology and biostatistics from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, MD. She completed her postdoctoral training in the National Cancer Institute (NCI)'s Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program (CPFP), conducting research on the role of insulin-like growth factors in diet-related cancer. Subsequently, she joined NCI's Center for Cancer Research as a Scientific Program Specialist, became Associate Director of CPFP in 2006, and has served as the Chief of the Office of Education in the NCI's Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics since 2008. Dr. Lavigne is experienced in mentoring and training junior scientists and received the NCI's Outstanding Mentor Award in 2008.

Juan J. L. Lertora, MD, PhD

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Dr. Lertora joined the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center in 2006 as Director, Clinical Pharmacology Program. He is in charge of the highly subscribed "Principles of Clinical Pharmacology" course offered through the Office of Clinical Research Training and Medical Education (NIH-CC/OD). In addition to teaching, Dr. Lertora is involved in mentoring students and trainees working at NIH, and has established an elective rotation in Clinical Pharmacology for senior medical students at the Clinical Center. Dr. Lertora has also collaborated with the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research to establish a special rotation in Clinical Pharmacology for NIH trainees interested in the regulatory aspects of clinical research and drug development. Before joining the NIH, Dr. Lertora was Professor of Medicine and Professor of Pharmacology at Tulane University School of Medicine, where he headed the Section of Clinical Pharmacology (1981-2006) and conducted clinical (bedside) research in pharmacokinetics and Phase I-II clinical trials of antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS, as well as bench (preclinical) research on erythropoietin, zidovudine, and antiarrhythmic drugs. Dr. Lertora earned his MD degree at the Faculty of Medicine, National University of the Northeast, Corrientes, Argentina, and his PhD degree in Pharmacology at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Gina Mattia, MT (ASCP)

Chief Medical Technologist Phlebotomy Services
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Gina Mattia is the Chief Medical Technologist at the NIH Clinical Center, Department of Laboratory Medicine Phlebotomy Services. From 1988 to 1998 she worked as a Medical Technologist in Chemistry, Hematology and Transfusion Medicine at Howard University Hospital Clinical Labs. For many years she taught the clinical aspects of Laboratory Medicine to Medical Technology students and Pathology residents. During her career as

the Phlebotomy Manager at HUH from 1999 to 2007, she specialized in Laboratory Administration and managed the Phlebotomy accreditation guidelines of the College of American Pathologist, and the Clinical Laboratory Standard Institute. Gina Mattia earned her Bachelor of Science in medical technology from the City University of New York CUNY, Staten Island College.

Sharon L. Milgram, PhD

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Dr. Milgram received a BS degree in physical therapy from Temple University in 1984 and a PhD in cell biology from Emory University in 1991. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Johns Hopkins University before joining the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1994. At UNC Dr. Milgram rose to the rank of Full Professor with Tenure in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology. Her research focuses on cell signaling and protein trafficking in polarized cells; it has been published in journals including *Journal of Cell Biology*, *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*. Her research was supported by grants from the NIH, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the American Heart Association. Dr. Milgram held a number of administrative positions at UNC including Associate Director of the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP), Director of the Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program, and Director of the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience. She founded and advised the UNC Office of Postdoctoral Services and served on the advisory committee of the Signal Xi National Postdoctoral Survey. Dr. Milgram served as principle investigator on a number of nationally-funded training grants including an NSF-funded program for undergraduate students, and NIH grants to support predoctoral students in Cell and Molecular Biology as well as an Initiative to Maximize Student Diversity grant spanning the Schools of Medicine and Public Health at UNC. In 2007 Dr. Milgram joined the NIH Office of the Director as the Director of the Office of Intramural Training & Education. She is also Senior Scientist in the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Robin Minor, PhD

Postdoctoral Fellow
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Dr. Minor has been an intramural research fellow in the Laboratory of Experimental Gerontology of the National Institute on Aging since 2008. Her research focuses on the influence of diet and eating patterns on health and longevity. Currently she coordinates several long-term mouse projects testing both natural and pharmaceutical compounds for their ability to improve measures of health and extend lifespan. Dr. Minor has served as a mentor to pre- and post-baccalaureate fellows at the NIA, and she is also an adjunct lecturer in nutrition at the Community College of Baltimore County, Dundalk campus. Dr. Minor earned her PhD in human nutrition from the University of Florida in 2007.

Michaele R. Smith, PT MEd

Deputy Chief, Physical Therapy
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Michaele R. Smith is a senior physical therapist at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland who is currently serving as the Acting Chief and Education Coordinator of the Physical Therapy section. She is coordinator of a postgraduate Clinical Research Training Fellowship program for physical therapy at the National Institutes of Health. CAPT Smith completed undergraduate course work at Morgan State University, obtained a BS in physical therapy from Howard University and an MEd at George Mason University. As Captain in the U.S. Public Health Service, she is the Discipline Specific Liaison and past Mentoring Chairperson of the Therapist Professional Advisory Committee (TPAC). She has completed the Bobath neuro-developmental (NDT) certification in the treatment of children. In addition, she serves as Chair of the HIV/AIDS Scientific Interest Group and past chair of the Cultural Competence Committee and is a credentialed clinical education instructor through the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). Her clinical and research interests are in the areas of pediatric HIV infection, children with genetic disorders, Juvenile Dermatomyositis, Neonatal Onset Multi-systems Inflammatory Disorder (NOMID) syndrome and stroke rehabilitation. She has lectured at local, national and international conferences and written articles on the topic of pediatric HIV infection, Juvenile Dermatomyositis and genetics. Her passions are in the area of mentoring junior officers, adolescents, therapists and participating in health fairs.

Lawrence A. Tabak, DDS, PhD

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Dr. Tabak has recently assumed a new position as NIH deputy director. He served as director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research from September 2000 to 2010, as acting NIH deputy director in 2009, and most recently as the acting director of the NIH Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiative. He came to NIH from the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Rochester, where he was the senior associate dean for research, director of the Center for Oral Biology, professor of dentistry, and professor of biochemistry and biophysics. While maintaining an active research lab within the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Dr. Tabak's major research focus has been the biosynthesis and function of mucin-glycoproteins, molecules that are heavily decorated with sugars and help form the coating that protects the delicate inner soft (mucosal) tissues of the body. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Dr. Tabak received his undergraduate degree from City College of the City University of New York, his DDS from Columbia University, and both a PhD and certificate of proficiency in endodontics from the University of Buffalo. A former NIH MERIT recipient, Dr. Tabak has received several honors and awards for his work including being elected as a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies and as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Robert C. Walker, Jr., PhD

Postdoctoral Fellow
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Dr. Walker is a graduate of Rust College, a small historically black college in Holly Springs, MS. While at Rust College, he accepted the opportunity to engage in two consecutive summers of biomedical research at Meharry Medical College (Nashville, TN). This summer research was sponsored by the NIH Minority Biomedical Research

Support (MBRS) program. During those summers of exciting and productive biomedical research, He decided to pursue a career in biomedical research. In 2001, he matriculated to Meharry Medical College to study for his doctoral degree in the Division of Microbial Pathogenesis and Immune Response. Dr. Walker elected to join a molecular parasitology laboratory, led by Dr. Minu Chaudhuri concentrating on *Trypanosoma brucei*, the causative agent of African sleeping sickness. There, he developed his graduate research project, "Gene Expression Regulation of Trypanosome Alternative Oxidase (TAO) in *Trypanosoma brucei brucei*". After completing his graduate studies and graduating with his PhD in 2007, he had a desire to shift his research focus to HIV-1/AIDS, a deadly disease that is infecting individuals at an alarming rate around the world, mainly in the urban communities. He accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). He works in the Laboratory of Molecular Microbiology under the guidance of Dr. Klaus Strebel, a pioneer and distinguished investigator in the HIV-1 field. During this current fellowship, he performs HIV/AIDS research, studying the effect of host restriction factors on HIV-1 pathogenesis. He hopes to add to the scientific knowledge to deepen the understanding of this virus, thus leading to the elimination and eradication of HIV-1/AIDS.

Wanda Whitney, PhD, MLS, AHIP

Librarian

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Dr. Whitney is a librarian in the Reference and Web Services Section of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) where she provides reference service and supports the MedlinePlus en español Web site. She started at NLM in 2005 as a contractor librarian while completing her Masters in Library Science. Before starting full time at NLM in 2008, she worked previously at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore, MD; the National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health in Washington, DC; and the Newseum Library in Laurel, MD. She also works part-time as a substitute librarian for Montgomery County Public Libraries. Before becoming a librarian, Dr. Whitney was a Spanish teacher/professor at the high school and university levels. Dr. Whitney earned her AB degree in Spanish and International Relations at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, VA; her PhD in Spanish at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA; and her MLS at the University of Maryland, College Park.