

IN GOOD HANDS

- WITH THE DIVISION OF RHEUMATOLOGY

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“Science without conscience is the soul's perdition.” ~François Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, 1572



SENSATIONAL STAFF

Evan Weber is a research technician, working in Dr. Harris Perlman's lab. He's been with the Division of Rheumatology since late September of 2008. Hailing from Louisville, Kentucky, Evan moved to the northern suburbs of Chicago as a junior in high school. After he completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan, he occupied his last summer doing neuropsychology research.

Coming to Northwestern was an obvious choice for Evan. He says, “I went to high school in the north suburbs of Chicago, so it seemed natural for me to come home after undergrad. Plus, I never really got to spend a lot of time downtown as a kid, so city life is still relatively new to me. Northwestern, in my opinion, has the best facilities and the highest quality of educators out of any of the Chicago medical schools...it was a no brainer.”

Evan is eager to gain experience here and excited to learn more. “I love learning new things about science, life, and people. Working in medical research provides me with an opportunity to expand my knowledge on subjects that I care very deeply about. It's also fun being a small piece in a much larger scheme that has such a profound impact on individuals' lives and the healthcare system as a whole,” he tells.

The medical field has allured Evan for quite some time. He tells, “I've wanted to be a doctor since as far back as I can remember...but I'm taking at least another year before I attend medical school to reflect on my personal goals in life. I hope working at NU will inspire me further to pursue a career in medicine.”



When he's not here, Evan enjoys spending time watching sports games. “The Bulls are my #1 team, but the Cubs aren't too far behind; if they won a little more often, they might have claimed the top spot,” he tells. And, he plays the guitar with his free time; he says, “I love playing the guitar, especially the blues...it's probably my favorite thing to do. Surfing and playing basketball rank up there as well.”

Evan looks forward to continued work with Dr. Perlman and the lab. He says, “I hope that my outgoing personality, work ethic, and desire to learn will aid in achieving our lab's goals. Oh, and discovering a medical breakthrough would be nice!”

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THE GOOD FELLOWS

Carmelita Colbert, MD, is a first year fellow in the Division of Rheumatology. Prior to her fellowship here, Carmelita completed a three year, Internal Medicine residency at the University of Illinois at Chicago/Advocate Christ Medical Center. She remained there a fourth year to serve as chief resident and junior faculty in the Internal Medicine Department. Originally from Westchester, Illinois, a western suburb outside of Chicago, Carmelita left the area before residency and attended Medical School at the University of Louisville, in Louisville, Kentucky.



Thus far, Carmelita has enjoyed it here, saying, “The first year of fellowship has been wonderful. I look forward to embracing the remainder of my training including beginning my research career and obtaining a Masters in Clinical Research.”

The medical field has been an area of interest for Carmelita for a long time now. She tells, “At the age of 9 I knew that I wanted to become a physician due to the influence of my physician who was also a family friend. I noticed her compassion and empathy at an early age and aspired to be like her.”

However, Carmelita’s interest in Rheumatology developed more recently. “I became interested in rheumatology during my third year of internal medicine residency. Throughout residency I seemed to enjoy all of the elective rotations, but took a particular interest in Rheumatology. I developed a love for outpatient medicine and found rheumatology rewarding. The patients that I encountered were intellectually challenging and seemed exceptionally appreciative for improvement in their symptoms. I knew that rheumatology was a dynamic field that was constantly changing and I wanted to contribute to the new advances in the field,” she explains.

The work Carmelita has been doing here is precisely what she’s looking to take into her future. She says, “After fellowship I see myself practicing rheumatology at an academic institution where I can continue to be involved in clinical medicine and strengthen my research skills.”

Calendar of Events:

- January 19 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 20 - Inauguration of President Obama
- January 26 - Annular solar eclipse
- February 1 - Super Bowl XLIII in Tampa, FL
- February 8 - 51st Annual Grammy Awards
- February 14 - Valentine’s Day
- March 17 - St. Patrick’s Day
- March 20 - First day of Spring

LET’S WELCOME

Newcomers to the Division:

- **Evan Weber**
Research Technician in Perlman Lab
- **Melissa Mavers**
Graduate Student in Perlman Lab
- **Ming Yi Chiang**
Research Technician in Datta Lab
- **Liqun Xiong**
Research Technician in Varga Lab
- **Feng Fang, PhD**
Research Asst. Professor in Varga Lab

THE FACULTY

Calvin Brown, MD, is the newest clinical faculty member and Fellowship Training Program Director in the Division of Rheumatology. He received his medical degree from Wayne State University, and completed residency in medicine at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and fellowship in Rheumatology at the University of Michigan Hospitals. Dr. Brown is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American College of Rheumatology.

He was an integral part of establishing the Division of Rheumatology at Rush University in 1986, and contributed to research while building a clinical practice and fellowship program from scratch. There, he was an Associate Professor of Medicine, and he found the challenges to be extremely rewarding throughout the years. He settled into a routine that made his career a satisfying one.

“I fully expected I would continue my career [at Rush] until it was time to retire,” Dr. Brown says. “Being in academic rheumatology in Chicago, I of course knew, and admired Dr. Walter Barr, and saw him grow his educational and clinical excellence at Northwestern. He became a nationally known and regarded leader in the field. When the opportunity arose to attempt to continue that excellence at Northwestern, I decided to take on the challenge; and I feel very honored to be given the opportunity to do so here.”

Even before his years at Rush and now at Northwestern, Dr. Brown was no stranger to the medical industry. “I was raised in a family of doctors and teachers,” he says. “My grandfather was the first ophthalmologist (eye-ear-nose-throat) specialist in the state of Michigan, and was my original inspiration for a career in medicine.” Dr. Brown’s grandfather pioneered many operations and techniques for removing foreign bodies from eyes, a common problem in the rough, early days of the automobile industry that was just beginning in Detroit. “I remember experiments in his laboratory, the kitchen of their home, with magnets and other devices to pull metal fragments out of eyes through the same pathway they entered, thereby lessening the damage. He convinced a new businessman named Henry Ford to switch from grinding metal parts to tossing them in drums with dried corncobs to prevent eye injuries; I like to think of this as perhaps one of the first attempts at occupational safety!”

Dr. Brown’s parents also played an important part in his development. “My mother was a teacher, and education was always first priority in our family. I think that is why today I combine my interest in medicine with a devotion to education and teaching.” However, Dr. Brown’s father went into neither education nor medicine, but rather into the automobile industry (a natural option in Detroit), and required Dr. Brown and his brother to work in the auto plants during summers. “I hated it,” he tells. “One day a neighbor who knew I was interested in medicine offered an opportunity to work in her laboratory during the summer. She ran a research lab in rheumatology, and said I could work as a lab assistant.” Rather than continue working in a hot, dirty factory, Dr. Brown jumped at the opportunity and began to truly appreciate how interesting and rewarding medical science could be.

Another influence for Dr. Brown’s interest in medicine came around the same time of his work in that research lab. He explains, “My sister developed a swollen, painful elbow, and eventually had surgery because the doctors thought she might have had a tumor. It turned out to be synovitis, and she later went on to develop juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. So the combination of experiencing the disease through her, and working in the laboratory led me to want to pursue a career in rheumatology.” As he persisted in achieving his goal, Dr. Brown came to Northwestern for residency in internal medicine and had the opportunity to work under Drs. Frank Schmid and Susan Pearlman, who only helped solidify his ambitions to become an academic Rheumatologist.

The medical track that Dr. Calvin Brown set upon led him to another interesting turn. “I met my to-be wife, a Wesley-Passavant School of Nursing and Northwestern graduate, who was an experienced nurse in the emergency room while I was an intern at Northwestern. This was in the brand new Olson Critical Care Pavilion, just one floor below where my office is today.” The two were married in the Alice Millar Chapel on the Evanston campus the day after he finished residency, and they have been together ever since, for 28 years.



Pictured above: Dr. Brown on his 55th birthday, riding up Maroon Bells, Aspen, CO with a friend.

IN MEMORIAM



Walter G. Barr, MD

October 3, 1949–December 25, 2008

Rheumatologist Walter G. Barr, MD, professor of medicine, died on Christmas Day. A resident of Western Springs, Illinois, Dr. Barr has been a faculty member at Northwestern since 1999. His commitment to educating medical students, residents, and fellows was recognized at the 2008 Founders' Day Convocation at the Feinberg School, where he received the Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence.

Dr. Barr earned his MD degree at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and completed an internal medicine residency and a clinical immunology fellowship there as well. From 1979–1982, he served as a rheumatology fellow at the Mayo Clinic and Hospitals in Rochester, Minnesota, where he won the Philip S. Hench Award for outstanding achievement. He returned to Loyola in 1983, serving as chief of the Section of Rheumatology (1986–1992). From 1992–1999, Dr. Barr directed the Stritch School of Medicine's Division of Continuing Medical Education.

Since arriving at Northwestern in 1999, Dr. Barr served as clinical practice director for the rheumatology division at Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation and continued his longstanding role as an Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society councilor. From 1999–2007, he was director of the Northwestern McGaw rheumatology fellowship program. Among numerous professional accomplishments, he served as president of the Chicago Rheumatism Society, chair of the Board of Directors of the Arthritis Foundation, Greater Chicago Chapter, and president of the Association of Specialty Professors. In 1995 he received the Outstanding Service Award from the Arthritis Foundation, Illinois Chapter.

At the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), he served as chair of the subcommittee on Training Standards and Outcomes from 1999–2004. In 2001 he became a member of the Committee on Training and Work Force Issues for the ACR and was appointed its chair in 2003. In this position, he advanced many issues related to the training of rheumatologists, including the Training Program Directors meeting and the Rheumatology Match. In addition to his service on the ACR Board of Directors, he also served on the ACR Research and Education Foundation Board of Directors since 2004. In 2008 Dr. Barr received the ACR Distinguished Service Award. In summary, Dr. Barr was a model rheumatologist, respected colleague, beloved mentor, and champion of the development of future rheumatologists.

Dr. Barr's survivors include his wife, Mary Massa, MD, and children, Walter Jr., Luke, and Maria. In lieu of flowers, please send memorials to NU-Alliance for International Development (NU-AID), an organization for which Dr. Barr volunteered.

**IN GOOD HANDS IS WRITTEN BY AARON DELEE
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