

**Sixteenth Annual History
of Medicine Dinner and
Lecture Featuring Former
State Archivist Guy Rocha**

The annual history of medicine dinner and lecture will be held on November 23, 2009, 6:30 PM, at the Eldorado. Former Nevada State Archivist Guy Rocha is the feature speaker and his subject is: "NEVADA STORY-TELLING AND MYTH-BUSTING: WHY THE TRUTH MATTERS." The public is invited. The dinner is \$35 and reservations should be made with Lynda McLellan at the Department of Pathology, 784-4068.

Our latest book, *The Birthplace of Nevada Medicine: Carson City* by Richard Pugh and Anton Sohn will be released at the November 23 History of Medicine dinner and will be available for purchase. (A book signing later this fall will be held in Carson City.)

**A Doctor and His Street: George H.
Thoma, MD (1843-1907)**

By Anton Sohn, MD
Editor

Dr. George Thoma was a leading physician in nineteenth-century Nevada and his importance merited that a street in Reno be named in his honor. (Thoma Street is located two blocks north of the VA Medical Center and runs east-west between Virginia and Yori Streets) Thoma was born in Montgomery County, New York in 1843 to German immigrants, and he graduated from Albany Medical College at the age of twenty-one after a brilliant academic career. Like many German descendents, he pledged his life to his new country and joined the Union Army as a surgeon in the Second New York Heavy Artillery. He was at the front with Grant's Army when Lee surrendered.

Attracted by adventure and reports of wealth in Nevada, he joined a freight wagon train for Salt Lake City. From there, he drove a mule and wagon with two

companions across the desert and mountains in 1867 to the Reese River Valley (now Austin, Nevada) to work in the mines. When he arrived in the valley his clothing was in tatters, and he and his companions were exhausted by exposure and deprivation. He supported himself as an ore-sorter in a quartz mill, and years later, friends recalled he enjoyed recounting his experiences in the mill. In the evenings, after a hard day in the mill, he pursued his first love—practicing medicine. Mining discoveries took him to Eureka, Hamilton, and finally in 1872 to Pioche, where he was involved in the first attempt to form the Nevada State Medical Association. The doctors formulated a fee schedule, but the association would not come into being until 1904.

Dr. Thoma was civic minded and was elected to the Nevada State Senate. He served as a senator from 1884 to 1888. During this period he went to



George H. Thoma, M.D. (1843-1907)

Sacramento, where he met his future wife. They returned to Nevada where he finished his tenure in the legislature and his new wife taught school. In 1887 they established a permanent home in Reno where they would reside until his death in 1907. Early in 1891 he was appointed superintendent of the Nevada Mental Hospital (now Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Hospital) in Sparks, and he served one year in that capacity. In Reno he strove to improve the practice of medicine and helped to pass the 1899 state law that regulated the practice of medicine in Nevada. He was also prominent in the formation of the Nevada State Medical Association and served as its second president in 1906.

In Reno, Dr. Thoma had extensive real estate holdings, and, with Mr. Bigelow, he built a building at First and Virginia, which became the home of the Woolworth 5¢ and 10¢ Store. He had two daughters, who became Mrs. Roy Hardy and Mrs. George Wingfield, Sr. Dr. Thoma died January 30, 1907.

Nevada Health Service Corps Established in 1989

By Bob Daugherty, MD
Co-editor

After the 1989 session, when Senate Bill 87, authorizing and funding the Nevada Health Service Corps was passed, Caroline Ford and I thought it would be a nice gesture to ask Joe Dini to go with us to give the first Nevada Health Service Corps recipients their checks. Initially there were five recipients. We asked Mr. Joe Dini to accompany us because he was instrumental in passing the bill creating the service corps. We decided to use the state plane in order to accomplish the grants in one day. Thus, Caroline and I drove to Carson City and flew to Yerington to pick up Mr. Dini. Halfway there, Caroline realized that she did not remember to bring the checks!! So, we landed in Yerington and she ran inside to call her office to get the checks. This was before cell phones. Caroline, Mr. Dini, and I then flew to Reno where Caroline's staff person met us with the checks. The rest of the day went as planned.

The first recipients of the Nevada Health Service Corps were:

<u>Physician</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Current Location</u>
Rodney Phillips, MD	Eureka	Unknown
Allan Burnside, MD	Lovelock	Colorado
Cheryl Winder, MD	Fallon	Deceased
James Winder, MD	Fallon	Reno
Richard Ingle, MD	Winnemucca	Winnemucca

To date, one hundred healthcare professionals (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants) have been awarded funds to serve in rural and other underserved areas of the state.

The Start of the Psychiatry Residency at the School of Medicine

By Bob Daugherty, MD
Co-editor

After many days, weeks and months of explaining why we needed a psychiatry residency program, AB 345 was introduced in the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Marvin Sedway. Marvin was a tremendous supporter of the School of Medicine and its mission, but he always wanted more programs in Las Vegas. I had assured him a part of the psychiatry residency would include rotations in Las Vegas. Only after such assur-

ances did he agree to introduce and support the bill. Thus, the morning agenda in Ways and Means included psychiatry with Dr. Ira Pauly, Chair of Psychiatry, members of the psychiatry department faculty, and me in attendance. Only Dr Pauly and I were to testify and explain the training program. Dr Pauly went first and gave, as I recall, a very succinct explanation of the program. I followed with the budget explanation and justification. In the discussion, Chairman Sedway asked me about the

possibility of the residents rotating in Las Vegas. I assured him they would. At that moment, a member of the department jumped up and said he wanted to testify. Remember that any citizen can testify before legislative committees. Mr. Sedway recognized him, and the member immediately outlined why the program would not be accredited if residents rotated to Las Vegas. He quoted from the accrediting body's policy regarding continuity of care. Chairman Sedway immediately adjourned the committee meeting and announced that there would not be a residency. I waited for 20-30 minutes and then went into Chairman Sedway's office to try to mend our fences. As I walked into his office, he said "get out, get out, I don't want to talk to you. Get out!!" What a day!! The bill died in the Ways Means committee. The residency was started three years later with funds from the Department of Mental Health.

Fortieth School of Medicine Anniversary Celebrations

By Anne McMillin, APR
Public Relations Manager
University of Nevada School of Medicine

The final week of September witnessed a flurry of celebratory activity aimed at recognizing the fortieth anniversary of the University of Nevada School of Medicine with a series of events to pay tribute to the successes of the medical school since its establishment in 1969.

School of Medicine founding Dean George Smith, M.D., invited all thirty-two members of the charter class, which entered

in the fall of 1971, to gather at the home of Mrs. Nena Miller, widow of UNR President N. Edd Miller when the School started, to get reacquainted and discuss their medical careers and life paths since completing their first two years of medical school basic sciences in 1973. About a dozen members of that class, their spouses, and inaugural and current faculty members attended the September 23 reception.

The next night, the 28th Annual University of Nevada, Reno Foundation Banquet turned its focus to health sciences with a record crowd of nearly 1,000 people coming out to honor the University of Nevada School of Medicine's fortieth anniversary at John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks.

University President Milton Glick delivered the big announcement when he revealed that the William N. Pennington Foundation committed \$10 million for the purpose of the planned Health Sciences Building which will allow for the eventual doubling of both the nursing and medical student class sizes when it is complete in the fall of 2011. The building will be named the William N. Pennington Health Science Building and will sit just east of the current Pennington Medical Education Building.

Glick also mentioned the gifts provided for the building from the Nell J. Redfield Foundation and the Thelma B. and Thomas P. Hart Foundation and the many people and

organizations that helped the University reach its \$15 million fundraising goal for the facility.

President Glick recognized George Smith, M.D., the founding dean of the medical school who was in attendance and Susan Desmond-Hellmann, M.D., 1982, chancellor of the University of California San Francisco, the recipient of the School of Medicine's first Outstanding Alumni Award from the School's Alumni Association which was presented earlier in the evening at a reception.

Distinguished surgeon, teacher and writer Atul Gawande, staff member of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, gave the keynote address, noting that the challenge for the medical profession today is to make the medical experience better for patients who have long struggled with medicine.

Legislators Joe Dini, Don Mello, and Virgil Getto, who helped establish the school, were recognized with plaques at the reception before the banquet. Dr. George Furman, the first OB/Gyn chair in Reno, as well as Dr. Ron Pardini, who taught biochemistry to the first class, attended the festivities. Ted Bacon and Janice Goodhue, two of the original members of the School Advisory Board, were at the banquet. Charter faculty member Phil Gillette as well as



George Smith, M.D. and Owen Peck, M.D. at Mrs. Nena Miller's home, September 23, 2009.

Georgia Fulstone and Andrea Pelter, early strong supporters of the school attended. Former Deans, Robert Daugherty and Steve McFarlane, attended the events.

Charter Class members P. Colletti, L. Noble, J. Calvanese, M. Prupas, J. Moren, E. Piercznski, R. Ainsworth, R. Priest, J. Chamberlain, G. Manning, H. Nelson, and M. Rhodes attended some or all of the week's events.

The week's festivities concluded at the September 25 event in the Manville auditorium at which current School of Medicine faculty members gave presentations for continuing medical education credit to the attendees.

In Memoriam

Greasewood Tablettes was founded to preserve medical history. Unfortunately, we do not have the means to keep abreast of the lives of all healthcare practitioners. If we inadvertently miss a particular obituary, we invite you to send us a copy of a newspaper obituary.

Dr. Richard Petty (1914-2009)

Richard Petty was born in Illinois and graduated from the University of Illinois School of Medicine in 1940. He came to Nevada in 1941 and served in the US Navy during World War II. Dr. Petty retired in 1981 and died at his home August 31, 2009, in Carson City. His career is highlighted in *The Birthplace of Nevada Medicine: Carson City*. The book is available from Greasewood Press at the University of Nevada School of Medicine. (Reno Gazette Journal, September 6, 2009)

Dr. Harry Browne (1929-2009)

Harry Browne was born in Los Angeles and graduated from Cornell University Medical College. After his pathology training he served in the navy and was an assistant professor at Vanderbilt School of Medicine before moving to Reno in 1988. He was an associate pathologist at LabCorp for one year and retired in Sparks, Nevada. (Reno Gazette Journal, September 3, 2009)

Hoyt Miles (1918-2009)

Dr. Miles was born in Missouri on February 25, 1918. He attended Yale University Medical School and did a residency in urology at USC Medical Center in LA. He was licensed in Nevada in 1957 and practiced urology. He died at home on October 20, 2009, and no service or obituary notice was requested.