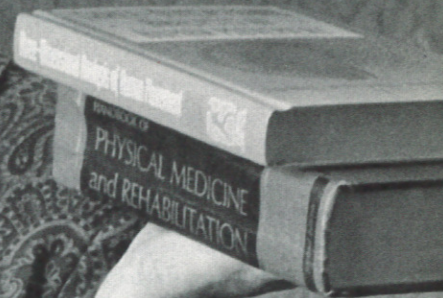




Spring 1999

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND



## A Balancing Act

Interview with Mary M. Rodgers, PhD, PT  
New Department Chair

Stories from the Class of '74

Report of Gifts

President's Message

Photo by Kevin Weber



Hello Everyone,

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for allowing me to represent you as president of the Alumni Association. It has been a rewarding experience and an honor to be your voice during 1998. During my term, I bade farewell to some old friends and welcomed some new ones. I saw the financial strength of the Association grow through a

fourth grant from the Alumni Association - International, Inc. and, more importantly, through your membership support.

In my last act as president, I encourage all of the physical therapy graduates of the University of Maryland, Baltimore to become involved with the Alumni Association. It will give you a unique opportunity to keep your fingers on the pulse of the program and the profession. In the changing health care environment, we need to be in the know. Taking an active role in the Alumni Association will give you access to this vital knowledge.

I will now take on the position of past president. In this role, I welcome Steve Bell as the new president of the Association. I am sure that Steve will have a very interesting term in the last year of this millennium and will enjoy being your president as much as I have.

Best wishes for 1999!

Jody Schmidt '92  
President  
UM PT Alumni Association

Board Member News



New Board members Chris Glavaris '88 and Kathy Davis '91 were welcomed at the Alumni Board holiday dinner, Dec. 3, 1998.

The Physical Therapy Alumni Board is sorry to say goodbye to departing Board members: Laura Flynn '92, Jeff Gonce '88 and Sandy McCombe Waller '85. Thank you for all your years of service. We welcome new Board members: Kathy Davis '91, Chris Glavaris '88 and Peggy Schmitt '69, who started their terms in January 1999.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the Physical Therapy Alumni Board, contact Kim Vickers in the Alumni Office at (410) 706-1816.

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PT is a publication of the Alumni Association of the Department of Physical Therapy, University of Maryland School of Medicine. It is produced in conjunction with the Office for External Affairs (OEA).

Editor & Director, Annual Giving and Alumni Programs  
Kim Vickers  
kvickers@physio.ab.umd.edu

Copy Editor  
Amanda Milewski

Art Director  
Erni Peterson

# Physical Therapy Month '98 - Something for Everyone!

Once again, both the students and physical therapy professionals at UniversityCenter in Baltimore joined to celebrate National Physical Therapy Month. The results were an even larger number of participants and twice as much fun!

The month began with the annual T-shirt design contest. This year's winning design, created by Jennifer Horton, a third-year student, appeared on the volunteer shirts and the Race for the Cure team shirts.

The UniversityCenter team was 101 runners strong at this year's Race for the Cure, almost twice as many participants as last year. Shirts for this event, as well as the volunteer shirts, were funded by our corporate sponsors, University of Maryland Medical System, Dynasplint Systems Inc., Sprint PCS,



In recognition of National Physical Therapy Month, the PT Month Committee was proud to receive a Governor's Proclamation from Gov. Parris Glendening recognizing both the importance of and contribution of physical therapy to the citizens of the state of Maryland. Committee members Kim Vickers (left), Kathy Davis '91 and Jennifer Brock '00 share the Governor's Proclamation with University President David J. Ramsay.

State Employees Credit Union and HelixHealth.

On the evening prior to the Race for the Cure, the Department of Physical Therapy celebrated the appointment of the new department chair, Mary Rodgers, PhD, PT with a reception held in the National Museum of Dentistry (see photos pages 6 and 7). Both campus officials and alumni attended this event which had an "inauguration" theme and included a visit from George Washington.

University Hospital sponsored the next event—their Annual Physical Therapy Department Open House. This celebration provided an opportunity for both the public and other health care professionals to learn more about the PT profession.

On Oct. 23, the Fifth Annual PT Olympics were held. This year's competition was fierce among teams representing the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, University Hospital, Alumni Association, faculty, and each of the three MPT classes. In the final race, the Wheelchair Grand Prix, the third-year class beat the second-year class by just six inches.

The final event of the month was the University of Maryland, Baltimore, Department of Physical Therapy Annual Open House for prospective students. More than 150 students attended the half-day introduction to the program. Visitors were given the opportunity, through multiple stations, to "experience" several of the courses offered in the PT program.



In October 1998, the department and the Alumni Association took part in the 3rd annual Founders Day Gala, which commemorates the founding of the University of Maryland, Baltimore. All dressed in black were (left to right) Kim Vickers, alumni director; Linda Schmidt; Jody Schmidt '92, president of the Alumni Association; Bobbie di Sabatino, retired staff; Mary Rodgers, chair of the Department of Physical Therapy; Dale Stephenson, department administrator; and Phil Webster (not pictured, Howard Neels '63 and Barbara Neels).

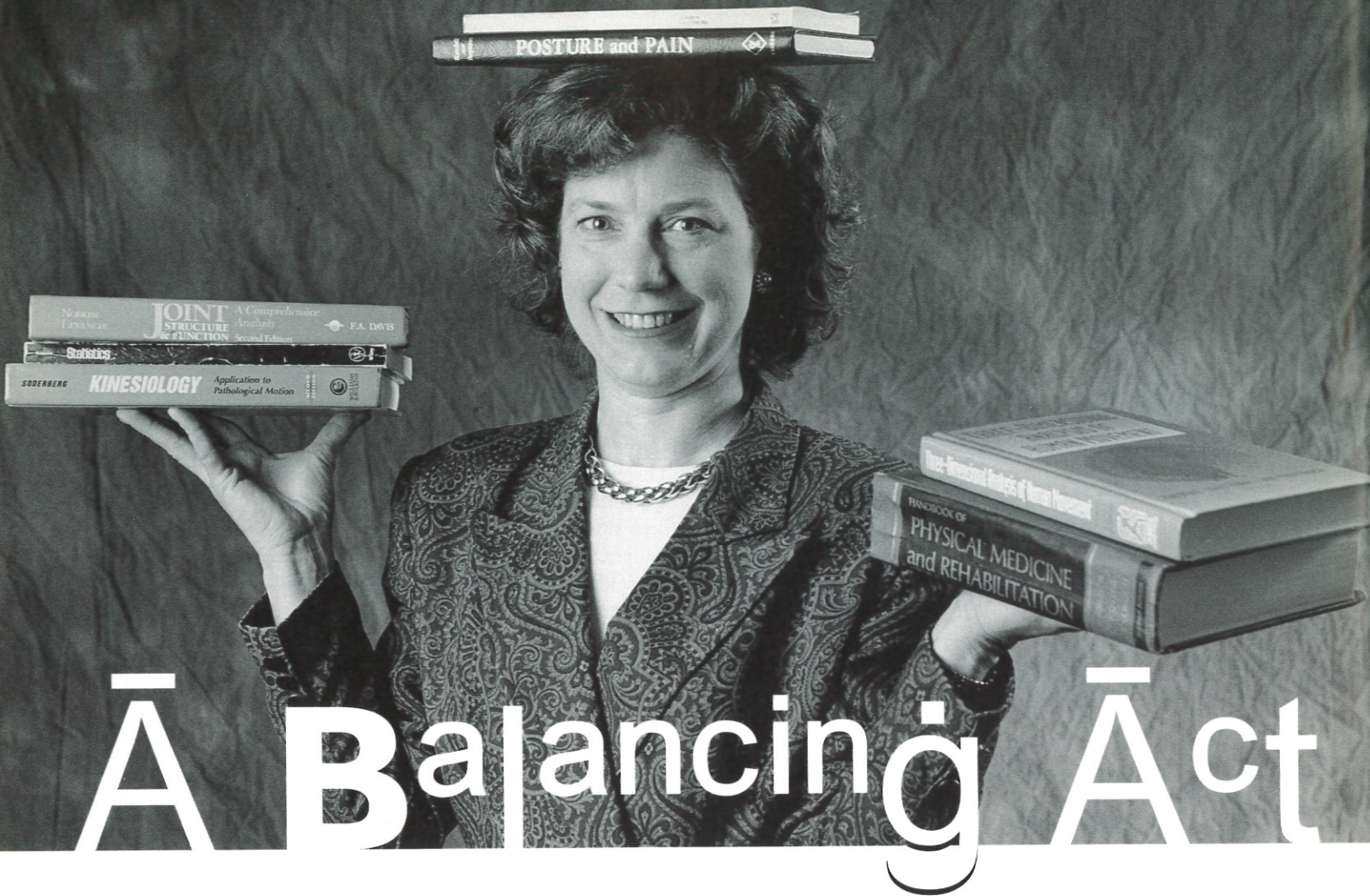
## Nominate Great Alumni!

We are currently accepting nominations for the 1999 Alumni of the Year Award. This award was established in 1988 to honor outstanding University of Maryland physical therapy alumni.

Nominees must be graduates of the University of Maryland PT program who have made outstanding contributions to or achievements in the physical therapy profession. Possible areas of achievement include academics, administration, clinical practice, research, community service, professional associations, the department or the Alumni Association.

Letters of nomination must include the nominee's name and class year, as well as the reasons for nomination. Responses must be received in the Alumni Office by May 1, 1999.

Please send your nominations to Kim Vickers, c/o Physical Therapy Alumni Office, 100 Penn St., Room 115, Baltimore, MD 21201.



*Mary M. Rodgers, PhD, PT, new chair of the University of Maryland's Department of Physical Therapy, talks about her life, research and work with the department and how she manages to balance them all.*

by Michele Wojciechowski

When Mary M. Rodgers was in high school in Lexington, N.C., and pondering a possible profession, she took some tests that are supposed to point students in the proper direction. Based on some of her likes—being active, spending time outdoors, interacting with people—and dislikes, the tests indicated two potential career paths: farming or physical therapy.

Luckily for the Department of Physical Therapy, she chose the latter. Although Rodgers has served as chair of the department since June 1998, she was named acting chair in January 1998.

Because she's been on the faculty since 1994, she is familiar with the department and has a clear vision of its focus and direction.

### **The Beginning**

Although she was born in Lake Wales, Fla., Rodgers considers herself a North Carolina native. Her family moved to Lexington when she was 3 years old and she lived there through high school. When those tests pointed her to a career in physical therapy, she conducted some research into the field.

"I decided that physical therapy was probably more in line with where I should head," Rodgers recalls.

After completing two years of undergraduate work at Meredith College in Raleigh, Rodgers transferred to the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, where she earned a bachelor's degree in physical therapy and met her future husband, Phil Webster. A year after graduation, they were married.

For the next few years, Rodgers worked in Asheville and Raleigh, returning to UNC to complete a master's degree

**Continued on the next page**

in medical allied health in 1981. A one-year stint teaching at Duke followed before she headed to Penn State for a doctorate in biomechanics, which she received in 1985.

Rodgers accepted a faculty position at West Virginia University and taught while conducting research with the Department of Orthopedic Surgery. Next, she moved to Ohio, where she worked at Wright State University doing mostly research. She came to Baltimore in 1994.

Although initially recruited by the University as a researcher, Rodgers also taught biomechanics and pathokinesiology.

## Becoming the Chair

When the PT department began recruiting, Rodgers had the opportunity to look at the candidates for the chair position as well as the needs of the department. At the time, she was not sure if she wanted to apply because her children, Cathlene, now age 7, and Neilsen, age 4, were so young.

"I thought that [being acting chair] would give me the opportunity to try it out for a little bit," explains Rodgers. "I felt like I could make a contribution."

When the search was completed, the committee chose Rodgers to lead the department into the next millennium.

## Mission and Vision

A few years ago, when the PT department became involved in a strategic planning initiative, Rodgers co-chaired the effort. As a result, she helped create the mission and vision for the department as well as some of its strategic initiatives. That experience has helped her greatly in her role as the department's leader.

"I have a real good handle on where all of us think [the department] should be going," says Rodgers.

"Our desire is to be one of the top programs in the country. We have all of the elements that we need to be able to do that. It's just a matter of putting them together appropriately and following through with some of the initiatives."

According to Rodgers, the PT department is moving forward in its quest for being the best. In February, the department received approval for its new doctoral program—a PhD that is interdisciplinary and research-oriented. They are also examining the possibility of developing a doctorate in physical therapy program, an entry-level professional degree that would be more clinically based.

The department would like to offer more continuing professional development for people who already have physical therapy degrees. They are also making sure that the PT program's curriculum effectively incorporates both clinical teaching and research.

Rodgers says that they have outreach programs to target students at the high school and college levels who may not have a lot of information about the physical therapy profession. The department is also fostering its relationship with the community and devising service opportunities for students.

Besides being in touch with the community, the department is looking into the technology of the future. Rodgers says that the department is always searching for innovative ways to incorporate technology into teaching and continuing education efforts. It's important, she says, for students to be comfortable with accessing the Internet and using other technological resources available to them.

## Striking a Balance

Besides all her work as department chair, Rodgers continues to teach because she believes that contact with students is important. She doesn't want to forget

about the challenges of teaching and she feels that it helps her be more sensitive to the needs of both the faculty and students.

For the last 10 years, Rodgers has been involved in research on wheelchair propulsion, which she continues today. Because of her biomechanics background, Rodgers is interested in what causes overuse injuries in people who use manual wheelchairs. She has examined different exercises that address the mechanics of how a person pushes a chair, with the idea that some of them could prevent overuse injuries.

With all her activities, what does Rodgers see as her greatest challenge? "Balancing all those things," she says.

When asked if she has any hobbies, Rodgers laughs. "I think I gave up hobbies when the children started coming," she says. She enjoys jogging, but admits that she isn't able to do it as regularly as she would like. She loves to travel and read, but most of her reading of late has been work-related.

What has made a significant difference in her life, Rodgers says, is having a supportive husband. She and Phil, who works for NASA, have been married for 21 years. "He's a great father and has always been very supportive of me and my career goals," she says.

"Being in a chair position in a medical school is maybe one of the most challenging things you can do now because of all the changing times...But my support [at the school] has been so great that I really feel like the challenges are surmountable," says Rodgers. "I'm committed to the program. I'm very excited about what's going on here, and I'm very much interested in doing what needs to be done to make sure that it goes in the right direction."

And although her life is often a balancing act, Rodgers keeps an even keel.

*Michele Wojciechowski is a Baltimore freelance writer.*

# Welcoming the New Chair

The Alumni Association, Department of Physical Therapy and School of Medicine celebrated the appointment of Mary M. Rodgers, PhD, PT, as the new chair of the department on Saturday, Oct. 3, 1998.



And the band played on...



A host of dignitaries were among the special guests: (from left) George Washington, Joann Boughman, vice president of Academic Affairs; Mary Rodgers, honoree; Donald Wilson, dean of the School of Medicine and Jody Schmidt '92, president of the PT Alumni Association.



Board members (left to right) Jeff Gonce '88, Laura Flynn '92 and Steve Bell '89 represented the Alumni Association at the event.



Classmates Kathy Davis '91 (left) and Linda Harvey '91 (right) with new Alumni Assistant Meg Feroli.



Margaret Alston '83 (second from the right) and guest get a blast from the past talking to Dixie Miliner '58 (left) and Ruth Latimer, former chair.



(From left) Recent graduates Ted Wong '97, Karen Lynn Gordes '98, Jennifer (Ridgely) Benzing '98, David Benzing '97, Sumesh Thomas '97 and Shruti Nabar stopped by to congratulate the new chair.

Event photos by Bill McAllen



Photo by Kevin Weber

Mary M. Rodgers



Guests had a chance to reminisce about the department with (from left) retired Chair Clarence Hardiman, Florence Kendall and Paul Brager '73.



Jody Schmidt '92, president of the Alumni Association, presents a "chair" with his usual flair to the new chair.



(From left) Alan Zeman '83 had time to chat with long-time faculty members Gad Alon and Paul Anderson.

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*As they prepare for their 25th reunion, four graduates share their stories of the last 25 years.*

# Whatever happened to...

## Stories from the Class of '74

by Michele Wojciechowski

An old adage claims that necessity is the mother of invention. George Hepburn's experience is proof of that.

After graduating from the University, Hepburn took a job at South Baltimore General Hospital (now Harbor Hospital) because he expected to learn a lot. At the time, he was married and had a child, and because he needed to make more money, Hepburn began working at Hammonds Lane Medical Center three evenings a week. Eventually, he took a job at a nursing home on Saturdays. Soon he was work-

### George Hepburn

ing on Tuesday and Thursday nights as well. Because of the strain all the work put on his marriage, in 1976, he quit his hospital job and went into private practice full-time.

Hepburn opened an office at Hammonds Lane Medical Center and a second in Laurel. His practice began servicing five nursing homes, and he hired full-time staff to help. During the course of his work in private practice and nursing homes, he began to see a pattern.

"I saw that my patients in both locations...had conditions of contracture and joint stiffness," explains Hepburn. "A fractured elbow, in those days, you could treat for six months, and still not have full range of motion...nothing had an impact on these people."

Hepburn had an idea. He needed a device the patient could wear for hours at a time, that could adjust the amount of stress and tension against the contracted tissue, and that could adjust at any level to meet a prescribed dose of time and intensity, depending on the patient's needs. It had to be easy to get on and off. Perhaps patients could even sleep in it.

In 1979, Hepburn created a schematic of his idea and enlisted the help of an engineer. Together, they developed the design that became Dynasplint.

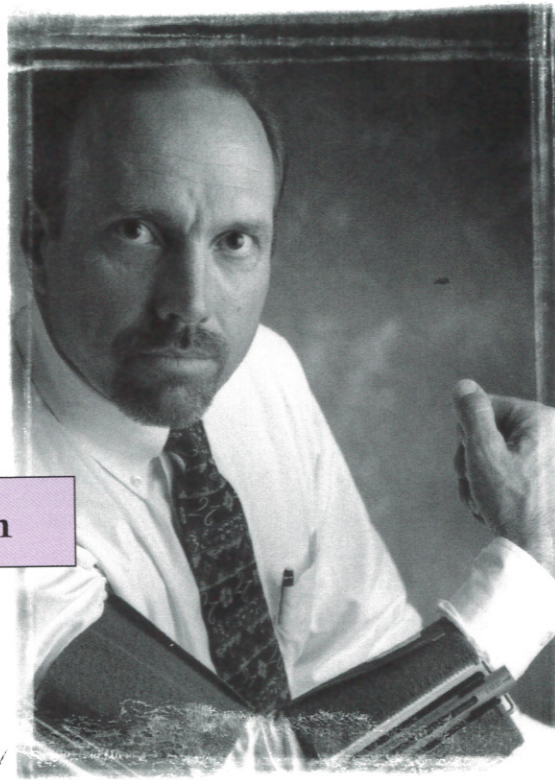


Photo by Kevin Weber

Hepburn had some Dynasplint prototype units made and tested them in his office and at nursing homes from 1979 to 1981. He became convinced that the invention would work. Hepburn sought advice on whether he should sell his idea to another company and receive royalties, sell it outright or start his own business.

"I knew if I delegated it out at that stage, much of the integrity of the system would get diluted," he explains.

In 1981, Hepburn founded Dynasplint Systems, Inc. Today, the company has 140 employees, more than 45 different splints and contacts in nearly every state. More than 60 sales consultants take orders from doctors and therapists, perform fittings on patients, and follow up to ensure that the treatment is done correctly. Although the corporate headquarters of

Dynasplint are located in Severna Park, the company has small offices in Europe and Canada and is establishing an office in Brazil.

Hepburn still has two practices, but stopped treating patients three years ago. His wife, Karen, helps keep things running smoothly at home. He has six children (two from his first marriage and four from his second). His daughter Kristen (25) worked at Dynasplint and is studying to be a PT assistant. Stacia (23) now works as a fitter for Dynasplint in Gainesville, Fla. Kelly (18) is a freshman at Virginia Tech studying graphic design and business. Casey (17), a high school senior, does administrative work at Dynasplint a few afternoons a week and would like to be a physician. Ashley (14) wants to be a physical therapist. Mark (9) would like to be either a physical therapist, a golfer or an architect.

"I haven't pressured any of them," Hepburn laughs. "I haven't said anything!"



## Barbara S. Oremland



Photo by Patrick L. Pfister

What do Parkinson's disease, stickball, minority issues, and a boxing legend have in common? For most people, not much. But for Barbara Oremland, they represent some of the paths that have crossed in her life.

After graduation, Oremland moved to Cleveland to work as a physical therapist. After her daughter Laura was born, she began working part-time for Mitchell-Zoltowicz Physical Therapy. While there, she had the opportunity to treat her first Parkinson's patient, and it changed her life.

In the '70s, Oremland explained, there wasn't much information on how to treat Parkinson's patients. Medication for the disease was not approved until 1970, so therapists basically performed maintenance as the patients deteriorated. Oremland began thinking about what was happening to these patients and began work developing a treatment program for Parkinson's.

As she treated more Parkinson's patients, she found that many could dance, but couldn't walk. She realized that they were missing something, some innate rhythm of movement. One day, she brought her metronome to work. As soon as she created a rhythmic background, her patients began walking. Over time, she taught them controls to use like humming or counting and how to use these techniques in stressful situations to recover their rhythm if they got thrown off.

Oremland began giving lectures and workshops locally and then nationally. She authored a chapter on basal ganglia disorders for the Manual of Physical Therapy. She helped to start the Parkinson's Education Program, the first patient support group in Cleveland. After completing her master's degree in education, she became an assistant professor at Cleveland State University (CSU).

Oremland has continued to lecture nationally on Parkinson's disease. In 1995, she presented a course at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. In February 1998, she was invited to speak about the physiology and treatment of Parkinson's disease and dystonia at the American Physical Therapy Association's (APTA) Combined Sections Meeting.

"I guess I've been passionate about this (Parkinson's disease) because I love these patients so much," she explains.

While at Cleveland State, Oremland was awarded a grant to increase minority enrollment in the physical therapy program. She helped produce a video called "Physical Therapy, Occupational

Therapy, and Science" and created a teaching unit for Cleveland public schools on how math and science are used in physical and occupational therapy.

Also in Cleveland, Oremland began working with television. When a documentary for PBS needed an assistant producer, Oremland applied and got the job. But the documentary was about baseball, a subject she knew nothing about. She learned quickly and joined the Cleveland chapter of SABR, the Society for American Baseball Research. When she moved to Kentucky, in 1992, she became director of the Kentucky chapter of SABR. She eventually began to speak around the country about cultural issues and baseball.

While in Kentucky, Oremland was an assistant professor at the University of Louisville (UL) and a physical therapy consultant with the UL Movement Disorders Clinic. Oremland has recently returned to Baltimore and is working as an independent consultant training health professionals in the treatment of movement disorders.

As a result of her work in health care, cultural issues and baseball, the president of the University of Louisville asked her to represent the school at a fund-raiser and private photo session with Muhammad Ali for the 50th anniversary of the Conference of Christians and Jews held in Louisville. When Oremland met Ali, she was overwhelmed.

"It's the first time in my life that I was actually speechless," she says.

When involved with a stickball fund-raiser for Neighborhood House, she added another feather to her cap. A New York team came to Louisville to play. When the Mayor discovered that New York had a stickball commissioner, he promptly named Oremland the stickball commissioner of Louisville.

Oremland even worked on a show for ABC about the history of baseball in Louisville called "Louisville Sluggers." She interviewed minority athletes who played during segregation. Her crowning moment came last summer when the University of Kentucky Press asked her to write the section on African-American baseball history for the inaugural *Encyclopedia of Louisville*.

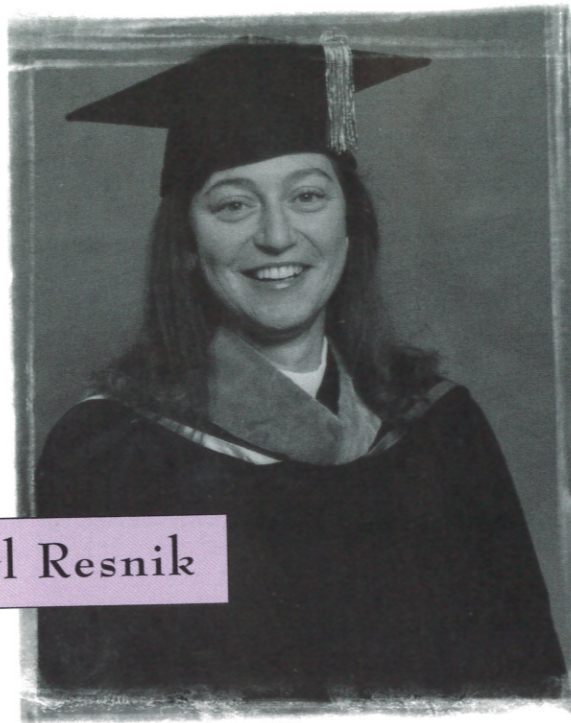
"It's been interesting because I hadn't planned to be on any of these paths," says Oremland.

In 1997, Cheryl Resnik achieved something that not every physical therapist does—she earned her DPT, a doctorate in physical therapy. Resnik never planned to get an advanced degree, but it was all part of her journey.

After graduating from the University, Resnik returned to her native Ohio and from 1974 to 1978 worked in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. She then moved to Arizona, where she worked at an acute care hospital on an American Indian reservation. When she decided to leave Arizona, Resnik moved to California and began working at Rancho Los Amigos, where she stayed for 15 years. During her time there, she worked with stroke, multiple trauma, and spinal injury patients as well as amputees. Resnik was promoted until she became the assistant director.

Four years ago, Resnik was recruited to direct the physical therapy department of the University of Southern California University Hospital (USCUH). In addition to working at USCUH, Resnik became an assistant professor of clinical physical therapy in the Department of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy at the University of Southern California (USC).

In 1990, Resnik received a master's degree in health care man-



Cheryl Resnik

Photo by Martin Elbogen

agement from California State University, Los Angeles. When she began teaching at USC, she knew that she needed to get an advanced degree and enrolled in the school's DPT program.

Resnik's doctorate is referred to as an advanced standing DPT; it's a doctorate for physical therapists who have worked in the field and have clinical skills, but need to study hard science to support their clinical work.

As director of physical therapy at USCUH, Resnik oversees all care provided in the transitional care center (which was opened during her tenure), outpatient physical therapy, inpatient acute, and inpatient rehab.

"[One thing] that I'm most proud of is that I've stabilized the staff. There was a great deal of turnover before I came here, and now the only reason people leave is

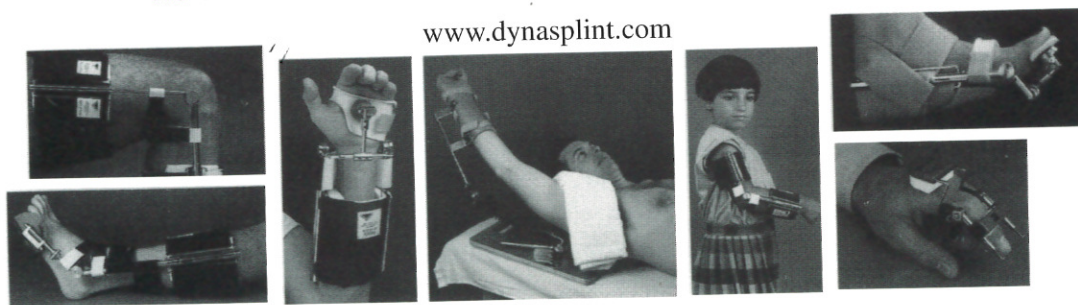
because they move," notes Resnik.

In addition to working full-time and teaching, Resnik takes classes in the medical education department of USC. She is also active in APTA, serving on the national executive board of the section on administration; as chairperson of the Greater Los Angeles District; and on the board of directors of the California Chapter.

Why does she like what she does? "Because I'm a glutton for punishment," Resnik laughs. "It's a challenge."

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