



# Memory and Aging

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT BRAIN HEALTH AND HEALTHY AGING

SUMMER 2014



Dora LeVarn and Ollie Doolittle

## Inspiring: Ollie Doolittle

**OLLIE DOOLITTLE**, a UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center patient and research study participant, will be featured in UC Davis Health System's fall marketing campaign. The print, television and outdoor advertisements will discuss how Doolittle, a former member of the military and postal worker, still is going strong despite his diagnosis. The ads will depict Doolittle and his softball teammates. That's right, Ollie plays softball several times a week as a member of a number of senior teams including the "Golden Seniors!" The inspiring story will be one of several that will appear in September 2014 as part of the campaign, "The Lives We Touch Inspire Us." ■

## Family Honors Beloved Mother

**PARTICIPATING IN THE ANNUAL** Walk to End Alzheimer's sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association is a tradition in David Higbee's family. Sisters Suzzie in Kearney, Neb., and Jeannie in Port Townsend, Wash. all participate in their local walks, while wife Anne, brother Keller from Salt Lake City and sister Carol from San Diego generally attend the Sacramento Walk for a true family affair.

The memorial honors their mother, Dorothy, who died of Alzheimer's in 2008 at the age of 88. A resident of Chester in Plumas County, Dorothy was a longtime patient, volunteer and friend of the Alzheimer's Disease Center who, after she was diagnosed, also participated in research.

So each year, a portion of the proceeds from her family's participation in the walk benefits the center.

"Mom was a member of your volunteer team and she even participated in your research," David Higbee said. "Ever since she passed away we've been involved."

Higbee works for a company called Mondelez/Nabisco, the manufacturer of Nabisco products, which matches his gifts to Alzheimer's Disease Center.

"My mother loved everybody down there," Higbee said. "Rebekha (Alfaro)



David, Carol and Keller Higbee

was just so wonderful with her, and we know that the funding is not where it needs to be. We donate all we can come up with, so that hopefully one day they'll have a cure." ■



## Join us for Brain Fitness 101!

**THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE CENTER** offers a six-week course designed to teach older adults about different ways to improve or maintain their brain health. Classes will present the latest research on factors that contribute to overall brain health, followed by an interactive discussion about approaches to incorporating this information into one's own lifestyle. Topics that will be covered include nutrition, physical exercise, mental exercise, stress management, and specific ways to improve memory. The course will include a total of six weekly classes, each lasting 1 ½ hours. This course is only offered a few times a year. We are enrolling for the fall course, to be held on the UC Davis Medical Center campus in Sacramento on Wednesday afternoons. If you are interested in attending, please contact Karen Lau, at 916-734-4301. ■

## UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center 2014 Calendar of Events

### Sept. 13: Spanish Mini Medical School

8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
UC Davis MIND Institute, 2825 50th St., Sacramento

### Sept. 25: Lecture: "Dementia: What is It? What are the Causes?"

6 p.m.  
Dan Mungas, UC Davis  
UC Davis MIND Institute, 2825 50th St., Sacramento

### Oct. 23: Lecture: "Insulin Resistance and Pathological Brain Imaging: New Approaches to Understanding, Treating, and Preventing Alzheimer's Disease"

6 p.m.  
Suzanne Craft, University of North Carolina  
UC Davis MIND Institute, 2825 50th St., Sacramento

### Nov. 15: Alzheimer's Disease Caregiver Workshop

8 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
UC Davis MIND Institute, 2825 50th St., Sacramento

For reservations or more information, please call 916-734-5728; Para la Escuela de Medicina de español Mini llamar Rebekha Alfaro al 916-734-5243 para información y reservas. El espacio es limitado.



## Nutrition for a Healthy Brain

**MORE THAN 160 PEOPLE** packed the Education Center auditorium on June 11 to hear Martha Clare Morris, Professor of Epidemiology at Rush University Medical Center's Department of Internal Medicine and Institute for Healthy Aging, discuss the importance of nutrition in preventing degenerative brain disorders, such as Alzheimer's dementia.

Martha Clare Morris is a professor of epidemiology and director of the Section of Internal Medicine and assistant provost of community research at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Her research focuses on community populations, their diets and eating behaviors and how their dietary practices relate to changes in their cognitive abilities over time.

Over the past two decades, research has revealed a lot about the foods and nutrients that contribute to brain health and protect against dementia. Morris' presentation highlighted this literature and identified the nutrients and dietary components that are unhealthy for the aging brain and outlined a diet that may be protective against the development of dementia.

Her own research focuses on vitamins E, C, omega-3 fatty acids and the B-vitamins. Morris has found that two key food groups have significant benefits for cognitive health: fish and vegetables. Further research is needed to pinpoint which food groups can be beneficial for cognitive health.

Based on research findings, Morris created the MIND diet, a variant of the Mediterranean diet that promotes including the following foods in one's diet for good cognitive health: vegetable oils, nuts, whole grains, leafy green vegetables, fish, poultry and berries, and suggests avoiding high-fat dairy products, fatty meats, fried and highly processed foods. Morris emphasized that the audience had taken a first step toward a healthier diet: building their awareness of which foods promote brain health. The next step: Take action. ■



## UPDATE 2014

# African American Caregiver and Wellness Forum



**MORE THAN 170 SENIORS,** caregivers, family members and supporters from the East Bay on Saturday April 12th attended the 16th Annual African American Caregiver and Wellness Forum, “Bringing Alzheimer’s into the Light,” held at the North Oakland Senior Center, in an event organized jointly by the UC Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Center and the Alzheimer’s Association of Northern California. Participants came from as far away as Contra Costa, Solano and Alameda counties, including representatives of a special area of focus: faith-based communities, since many African-American elders and their families receive much of their information and support from their churches.

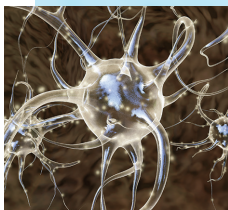
Seventy percent of people with Alzheimer’s live at home. Many caregivers hesitate to accept assistance

from others, discuss their feelings, or visit their doctors on a regular basis, so the impact of caregiving and wellness extends to millions of family members and friends. In light of these important issues, the African American Caregiver and Wellness forum provides vital resources and up-to-date information on Alzheimer’s disease and gives caregivers much-needed support and information.

The forum is organized by the AACWF committee and more than 20 volunteers from various organization and businesses, such as Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson’s office, the Alzheimer’s Disease Center, the Alzheimer’s Association and the Congress of California Seniors.

A complete video of the popular panel discussion and PowerPoint presentations by the speakers can be seen at <http://bit.ly/aacwf>. ■

## Research Awards



**LIN TIAN AND JOHN VOSS,** two recipients of Alzheimer’s Disease Center Pilot Research Awards, are advancing our

knowledge of potential treatments for Alzheimer’s and dementia. Both were recipients of \$32,000 awards for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Voss, UC Davis professor of biochemistry and molecular medicine, is exploring “Identifying the cellular action of a bifunctional anti-Alzheimer’s agent.” His work examines molecules called spin-labeled flourenes as therapeutic agents to prevent or delay injury in

individuals in the earliest stages of Alzheimer’s disease.

Amyloid is an accumulation of proteins and peptides that are otherwise found naturally in the body. One component of amyloid – amyloid beta (A) – is believed to be primarily responsible for destroying neurons in the brain. Flourene compounds, which are small, three-ringed molecules, originally were developed as imaging agents to detect amyloid with PET imaging.

In a study published in April 2012 in the Public Library of Science One (PLOS ONE), Voss and his colleagues found that SLFs may be an important new target for researchers and physicians focused

on diagnosing, treating and studying Alzheimer’s.

Tian is UC Davis assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine. Her research concerns the “Optical dissection of neuroglial interaction in a human AD model,” examining the linkages between Down syndrome and Alzheimer’s disease. Alzheimer’s disease occurs three-to-five times more often among individuals with Down syndrome. Using Down syndrome-specific induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs), Tian is working to identify bioactive compounds that can correct the course of Alzheimer’s disease. ■



## The Dark Side of the Silver Surge

**SINCE JANUARY 2011,** nearly

10,000 Americans have turned 65 each day, a rate that will continue for nearly two decades. But there is a dark side to the increase in the nation's longevity, often called the "silver surge." One in eight Americans is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. By 2050, as many as 16 million aging baby boomers will have been diagnosed with the condition, already the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

Scientists, neurologists, neuropsychologists and social workers around the world and at the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center are working diligently to diagnose and treat people with Alzheimer's, support their families and caregivers, and conduct research that we hope one day will stop Alzheimer's in its tracks.

Research is at the core of our center. Currently we are following hundreds of study participants each year to better understand the differences between the normal aging brain and brains deteriorating because of dementia. We already have contributed significant discoveries in the areas of neuroimaging and the relationship between vascular disease and Alzheimer's dementias.

Much of this work has been funded by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the California Department

of Public Health. During the 2009 recession, the state cut the California Alzheimer's Disease Center program in half, which resulted in a significant reduction in the delivery of services such as training new clinicians and providing educational programs for the public. The center's NIA funding also was cut, first by 2 percent and then again by 6.5 percent, with the federal budget sequester in 2013.

Nevertheless, each week we tell new patients and their families that they have Alzheimer's. These families face a sobering reality: The Alzheimer's Association estimates that, in 2012, caring for people in the United States with Alzheimer's topped \$200 billion.

These formidable statistics are why we need your support. One way you can help is by reaching out to your state and federal representatives to advocate for increased research dollars in Alzheimer's disease to accelerate the search for a cure.

We are heartened and inspired by the strength and resilience of our patients and their families. We are joined with them on the path to finding the silver lining in the dark side of the silver surge, through prevention, treatment and research.

– **Charles DeCarli**  
*Director, Alzheimer's Disease Center*

## Alzheimer's Walks – Join Our Team!

**The UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center will be participating in the Walk to End Alzheimer's in two locations this fall.**

The **Sacramento Walk** will be held **Saturday, Sept. 27** at the south steps of the California State Capitol (N and 11th Streets). Rebekha Alfaro is the team captain for the Sacramento Clinic. The team's name is UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the walk starts at 10 a.m. Register online at [alz.org](http://alz.org) or contact Rebekha at 916-734-5243.

The East Bay Clinic is organizing a team for the **Walnut Creek Walk on Saturday, Oct. 18** at Heather Farm Park, 301 N. San Carlos Drive, Walnut Creek. The team is being led by April Medina and is called UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center – East Bay.

Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. and the walk begins at 10 a.m. Register online at [alz.org](http://alz.org) or contact April at 916-804-7582.

**Both teams have a collective goal of raising \$12,000. ■**