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## Friends & SLULC news

### Navigating clinical trial research throughout the pandemic

At any given time, the clinical trials units in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at SLU has 30-40 active clinical research trials that are overseen by our dedicated and talented research staff. Maintaining the integrity of these trials and the safety of enrolled patients is paramount, but no one could be prepared for the difficulty of carrying this out when the coronavirus struck and turned our world upside down.

These dedicated women managed to navigate rough waters to keep everyone, including their patients afloat. Facing many challenges, such as research sponsors (pharmaceutical industry and NIH) and the university putting strict guidelines on the ability to continue trials, communicating effectively with patients, finding a way to distribute study drugs to enrolled patients, arranging laboratory tests for patients, and locating enough personal protective equipment (PPE) for our staff to be safe. These were the many challenges our clinical research team faced while waiting for effective Covid-19 vaccine development and distribution.

Complicating issues, several of these team members became sick with Covid-19 infection and had to be hospitalized. Thankfully, everyone recovered and were able to return to work. For this, we are extremely grateful.

Under the direction of Jason Taylor, MD, an advanced therapeutic endoscopist at SLU, this team participated in a North American registry of the digestive manifestations of Covid-19 and successfully enrolled approximately 100 patients who were hospitalized with a confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19. The objective of this important study was to characterize the digestive manifestations of COVID-19 by developing a registry of affected patients at medical centers across North America. Our team was able to collect and compile data on gastrointestinal and hepatologic of

signs and symptoms in hospitalized patients at Saint Louis University with a confirmed diagnosis COVID-19.

To say I am proud of our GI & Hepatology clinical research staff at Saint Louis University would be an understatement. They are leaders in their field at SLU and their mentorship and guidance is sought by many other departments throughout the university. They are giving of their time, respected by all, and appreciated by their patients. They are simply some of the best.

*Written by Lou Ann Biermann, RN, MSN*



Photo - pictured from L to R,  
Front Row: Jan Freebersyser, RN (supervisor), Theresa Cattoor, RN,  
J'Erica Edwards, RA, Annalyn Howells, RN, Lujain Jaza, RA, Back  
Row: Kari Gaskill, regulatory, Lakita May, RA, Liz Hoffman, RN,  
Chelsea Stanfield, RN Absent: Susan Torretta

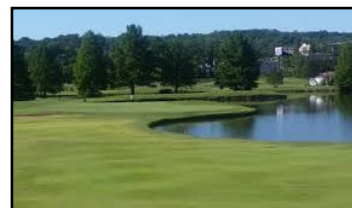
### It's time to get back in the "SWING" of things!



Friends of the Saint Louis University Liver Center are excited to add a golf tournament to the 2021 calendar of events! The "Inaugural" **SWING for a Cure** golf tournament will be held Thursday, August 19, 2021 at The Legends Country Club on the Robert Trent Jones, Sr. 18 hole course located in Eureka, MO. The scenic views of Eureka, open fairways and large greens, makes the golf experience unlike any other!

All money raised stays in the St. Louis area to perform life-saving research at the Saint Louis University Liver Center for the treatment and cure of liver diseases and to promote understanding and awareness of liver disease.

**For info or to register, call the Friends office at 314-576-3078**

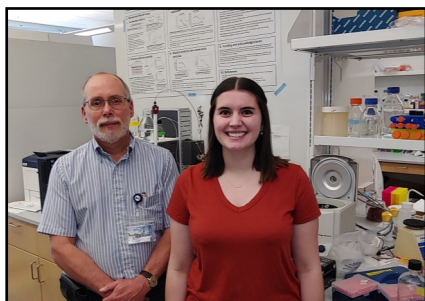


## 2021 SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED

The Liver Center hopes that student research fellowships will help foster the development of the next generation of medical researchers. The Summer Research Fellowship was initiated by the SLU Liver Center in 2018 for Saint Louis University undergraduate and graduate level students who have a keen interest in liver disease research. To date, funded fellowships have been awarded to 11 students. *The student must have a faculty mentor agree to the following assurances:*

- *The student will spend a minimum of 10 weeks; 30 hours or more per week during the summer working on the research projects outlined with the faculty mentor.*
- *The student will complete necessary training (IRB/CITI, laboratory safety, animal welfare) before conducting any research that requires this training and ideally before starting this Research Fellowship.*

These are the current fellows and their mentors.



**Faculty Mentor: John Tavis, PhD, Summer Research Fellow: Alaina Knier (Accelerated BS/MS program)**

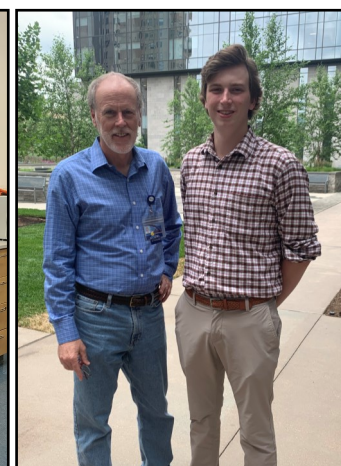
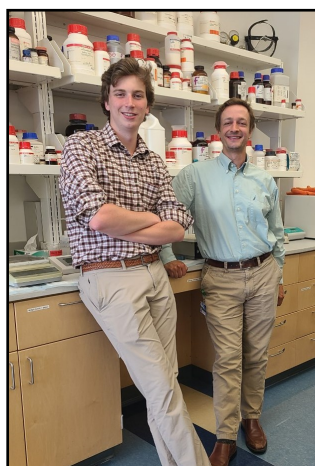
Project title: Evaluating feasibility of a two-domain reverse transcriptase/ribonuclease H recombinant protein for study of HBV replication and drug discovery

"Alaina is always grinning! She's one of the most enthusiastic and inherently happy folks I've ever met." – Dr. John Tavis

**Faculty Mentors: Kyle McCommis, PhD and Brent Tetri, MD, Summer Research Fellow: Martin Sharpe (BS Biology)**

Project title: *Improving hepatic metabolism via novel non-TZD chemicals due to their ability to inhibit the hepatic MPC.*

"Thanks to the Liver Center Summer Fellowship, I've had the privilege to study alongside some of the most driven and accomplished scientists in NAFLD/NASH research. I am extremely thankful to those who have made this opportunity possible!" – Martin Sharpe



**Faculty Mentor: Brent Tetri, MD, Summer Research Fellow: Taylor Hallcox (School of Medicine MS3)**

Project Title: Determination of MBOAT7 Stability

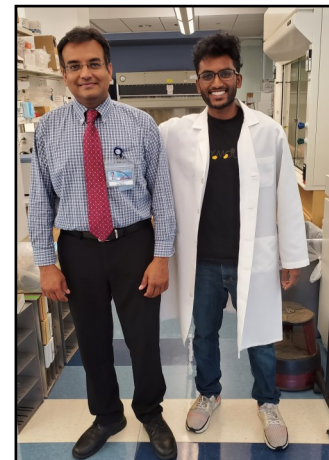
"I am truly grateful for the incredible opportunity the Liver Center Fellowship has given me to both learn about and contribute to NAFLD research with our brilliant team of scientists we have here at SLU. This experience has also furthered my interest in specializing in GI/Hepatology in the future to be more involved with NAFLD from the clinical perspective as well." – Taylor Hallcox, SLUSOM MS3



**Faculty Mentor: Ajay Jain, MD, Summer Research Fellow: Aakash Nagarapu (BS Biomedical Engineering)**

Project title: Effect of Total Parenteral Nutrition on Pancreas

"Being part of the 2021 SLU Liver Center Summer Research Fellowship program has been a highlight of my undergraduate studies at Saint Louis University. Dr. Jain has been a wonderful and supportive Principal Investigator, and I am excited to see what results we yield. Thank you to the SLU Liver Center for this wonderful and interesting opportunity." – Aakash Nagarapu





## INTRODUCTION TO HEP B COMMUNITY

This article is to introduce you to Hep B Community, an internet forum for HBV-infected patients. Hep B Community was started by Dr. Thomas Tu, a leading HBV molecular virologist who is HBV+. Thomas' goal in starting the forum was to provide a venue for HBV+ patients and their families to reach out to others fighting HBV, and to discuss HBV issues with community advocacy groups like the Hepatitis B Foundation and with leading HBV researchers.

Dr. John Tavis, Professor, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology at Saint Louis University, joined Hep B Community shortly after it was started. "I have been able to use my molecular virology and drug discovery expertise on HBV to answer questions the patients had about the virus, and this has been very well received by the forum members. As a laboratory scientist, I also find it very enlightening and enriching to learn first-hand about the difficulties faced by HBV+ individuals and to be able to help them a small amount" said Dr. Tavis.

The Hep B Community is a resource for HBV+ patients, and may also be useful for the trainees and researchers in the Saint Louis University Liver Center.

For more information on Hep B Community, visit <https://www.hepbcommunity.org/>.



*Join us for the 19th annual Diamonds Gala  
Saturday, October 16, 2021  
at the Chase Park Plaza*



## How Can You Help the Friends of SLULC? *Be a Sponsor - Be a Volunteer*



**Volunteers are the backbone of Friends of the SLULC!**

Whether you are interested in becoming a sponsor or want to answer phones, stuff envelopes or serve on a planning committee, we have volunteer opportunities available. You may volunteer as an individual or bring a group of friends. Please complete and fax this form to 314-576-3654 or mail to the Friends office.

A representative will contact you soon!

☐ Yes, I am interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities! Please contact me with more information.

☐ Yes, I am interested in volunteering! Please contact me with more information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Best way to reach you \_\_\_\_\_

Times you are available to volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Did you know...

Your AMAZON purchases can help support research at the Saint Louis University Liver Center?

*It's true – you shop and Amazon gives a percentage of eligible purchases (no fees or extra costs) to a charity - It's easy!*

Just follow these simple steps:

**1**-log in to AmazonSmile at: <https://smile.amazon.com/>

**2**-sign in with your Amazon user name and password.

**3**-then enter the Friends as your charity-here's how we're listed: **Friends of the St Louis University Liver Center**

You will only be asked to enter charity info on your first login.

Use the SMILEAMAZON link each time you shop and donations will begin to add up!

Your purchases can help support essential research at the Saint Louis University Liver Center and that puts a smile on our face!!

**THANK YOU!**

**amazon**smile  
You shop. Amazon gives.



## Leave a Legacy

Donations come in all shapes and sizes. Supporting the Friends through a financial commitment can be one of the most impactful ways to help CURE liver disease.

Many treatments that benefit today's patients are the result of life-saving research that was funded by others who included liver research in their estate plans.

You can help shape the future and leave your mark on tomorrow by making a provision for Friends in your will or trust. Through your will or trust you can leave:

- \* *A specific amount or a percentage of your estate*
- \* *All/part of what remains in your estate after all other bequests are made*
- \* *A conditional gift if beneficiaries do not outlive you.*

Please consider naming Friends as a beneficiary in an insurance or retirement account, or donating stocks.

**Learn more about connecting your legacy:**  
**(314) 576-3078**

# Tributes

The following tributes and memorial donations were received between January 1, 2020 and May 31, 2021.  
Thank you to everyone who honored a loved one with a gift to Friends of the Saint Louis University Liver Center.

## IN MEMORY OF STEVEN ADELMAN

Robin Ude

## IN MEMORY OF SUE BARLETT

Leisa Duff  
Joe & Joan Lipic

## IN MEMORY OF RUTH & RUSSELL BASLER

Melvin & Patricia Aubuchon  
Paul J. Azzara  
Kirk & Leisa Duff  
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Nathan Naeger  
Kenneth & Susan Seufert

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## IN MEMORY OF IRENE BIERMANN

Kathleen & Alfred Strout  
Dr. John Tavis

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Jim & Barb Schuette

## IN MEMORY OF BONNIE R. CUNEO

Paul J. Azzara

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William Hamill  
Lee & Marilyn Hancock  
Royce & Shelly Hoops  
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Ruth Sponsler  
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Jennifer Surman  
Dale & Cheryl Tadlock  
Steve & Barbara Zweigart  
Tom & Carol Zweigart

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Yan Sun

## IN MEMORY OF MARY HEDIGER

Lou Ann Biermann  
Kirk & Leisa Duff  
Dr. Dee Anna Glaser  
Sharon Williams

## IN MEMORY OF STACEY HODGES

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Ricky & Maxine Christoff  
David Hodges  
Beverly Knoebel  
Carol Prewitt  
Sommer Shamp

## IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL G. MALLON

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Anita Chandler  
Ann Cronin  
Kirk & Leisa Duff  
Steve Guetter  
Joan Guzik  
Steve Karst  
Pooja Kothari  
Keith Krebeck  
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Emily Regas  
Sally Rogers  
Lynn Rogut  
Rosen's Diversified, Inc.  
Ashley Ryder  
Chad Shearer  
Anthony Shih  
Chris Williams

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Max Munder

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Linda Aboussie  
Sara Barnett  
Joann Biehl  
Patricia Brasher  
Arthur & Anna Braun  
Phyllis Friedman  
Miggie Greenberg  
Chris & Rebecca Grubb  
Gayle Heady  
Vincent Lamb  
Benjamin Lee  
Melissa Lenz  
Kathy Manganaro  
Carolyn Ohlsen  
Karl & Kathy Reinlein  
Ken & Karen Reuling  
Philip & Kathy Roskos  
Erwin & Theresa Schwarz  
Raymond Tait  
Dr. Brent Tetri

## IN MEMORY OF MARTHA EGGERS SKINNER

Amy Woods

## IN MEMORY OF STUART SPROULL

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Amy Dehner

## IN MEMORY OF CLAUDE ZIMMERMAN

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David Rich

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Kathleen & Alfred Strout

## IN HONOR OF GEORGIA PETERSEN

Tom and Ann Petersen

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support of research  
for NASH  
and Transplant!



#### Friends of the Saint Louis University Liver Center

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1223 S. Grand Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63104  
Phone: 314-577-8764  
Fax: 314-577-8125  
Website: <http://livercenter.slu.edu>

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## What's Coming Up?

- \**Swing for a Cure* - The Legends Country Club, Eureka, MO, August 19, 2021
- \**Diamonds Gala* - The Chase Park Plaza, October 16, 2021
- \**AASLD - The Liver Meeting* - November, 2021
- \**Best of AASLD* - December 4, 2021

For information on Friends events:  
p: 314-576-3078 or [www.friendsoftheslulc.org](http://www.friendsoftheslulc.org)



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