

# Smith Scholar Update

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## ONE WOMAN'S GIFT CHANGES MANY LIVES

Florence Smith would be thrilled at all the good her scholarship recipients are doing. This generous Norfolk resident who died in 1952 left a bequest of \$460,000 to what was then The Norfolk Foundation. Her goal: Help Virginia students attend medical school in the Commonwealth.

As a physician's daughter, Smith knew the impact one doctor could have. Multiply that times the more than 700 physicians who are Smith Scholars and you get amazing results.

Over the decades we have awarded \$2.5 million-plus in scholarships in Smith's name. Our Smith Scholars make

their communities better in countless ways – treating patients, conducting life-saving research, teaching future physicians, staffing free clinics and leading medical associations. The list of their accomplishments goes on and on. To learn more about this impressive group of your colleagues go to [www.smithscholars.org](http://www.smithscholars.org).

In this special Smith Scholar Update you will read about four Smith Scholars. Each of you has a story to tell, and we hope you will share it at [www.smithscholars.org](http://www.smithscholars.org) or [smithscholars@hamptonroadscf.org](mailto:smithscholars@hamptonroadscf.org).

## Dr. Shirley Kahle Neitch: Devoted to Helping Older Patients

**Shirley Kahle Neitch, M.D. got her love of medicine from her parents. Both were nursing assistants at a mental hospital in Marion, Virginia. Their work inspired Neitch to become a physician working with older patients like those her mother cared for at the hospital.**

**T**oday Neitch is the 2011 president of the West Virginia Geriatric Society. Last year she won the David Z. Morgan Award given by the West Virginia Geriatric Education Center for her outstanding work with older adults.

Neitch is a 1977 graduate of the Medical College of Virginia (now VCU School of Medicine). "The Smith Scholarship was a marvelous surprise to me... Without it I would never have been able to even begin my studies," Neitch recalls. She later won a Public Health Service scholarship and ended up working for three years at a West Virginia rural clinic to pay back her Public Health Service obligation.

That experience led Neitch to the faculty of the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine at Marshall University in Huntington, W.V. She developed the school's geriatric curriculum and helped found the Hanshaw Geriatric Center at Marshall, which she directs. She also is section chief of geriatrics and general internal medicine at the school and is medical director for the Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute at West Virginia University. Among the institute's accomplishments is



establishing a registry to help track Alzheimer's patients and provide research information to help future patients.

For Neitch, a frequent speaker to senior and hospice groups, the Smith Scholarship she held for four years put her on a path of service to older adults. 🌱

# Dr. Tom Connally: 'A Real Doctor' After Retirement

N. Thomas Connally, M.D. has adapted his love of medicine to his latest stage of life. Google his name and you will find a 2007 article Connally wrote called "How You Can Still Be a Real Doctor After You Retire." The answer – volunteer at your local free clinic.

More recent Internet postings highlight Connally as a winner of the 2010 James B. Hunter Human Rights Award. Connally was honored for his impact as the current volunteer medical director of the Arlington Free Clinic.

Connally grew up in Norfolk and was a Smith Scholar during his four years at the University of Virginia School of Medicine where he graduated in 1962. The Florence L. Smith Medical Scholarship "markedly reduced the hardship on my family and enabled me to follow the career path of my talents and interests rather than chasing money."

Internal medicine is Connally's focus. He worked at the National Institutes of Health before practicing medicine in Arlington for 32 years. The former National Young Internist of the Year testified before Congress several times about health issues. He was named a master of the American College of Physicians and retired from private practice in 2000.

A former assistant professor at Georgetown University Medical School, Connally loves teaching. This spring he is



in the midst of teaching his 12th course for the Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute. His topic is 21st Century Medicine – a subject he plans to focus on in a new book. He is already the author of "The Third Third," a book about healthcare for people over age 60.

Connally delights in using his medical skills to help others during his retirement years. "When I meet someone... I don't have to say I am a retired internist and let it go at that." 🌿

## By the Numbers

**\$2.5 million+**

total  
Smith Scholarships  
paid since 1952

**700+**

number of  
physicians awarded  
Smith Scholarships  
since 1952

**\$4,800**

average  
Smith Scholarship  
awarded today  
(renewable for  
up to 4 years  
of study)

**\$1,060**

average cost  
of medical school  
per year  
in 1960

**\$55,000+**

average cost of  
medical school  
per year today  
(including  
tuition, fees and  
living expenses)

**\$156,456**

average amount  
of debt a medical  
student incurred  
upon graduation  
in 2009

# Dr. Scott Armistead: Caring for People in Pakistan

For Scott Armistead, M.D. the ideal place to work is a 60-bed hospital in Pakistan in the remote foothills of the Himalayas. Most Americans know Pakistan only from news reports about terrorism and conflicts. But for Armistead, a Smith Scholar, the Qalandarabad hospital is where he is making a difference one patient at a time.

**A**t Bach Christian Hospital Armistead is one of two primary care doctors treating poor people from seven ethnic groups.

Armistead is a caring physician known for the strides he has made in treating arthritic patients in Pakistan. “When I came here in 1999, there was no protocol for treating rheumatoid arthritis. I saw many debilitated patients,” says Armistead. Today the medicine and treatments Armistead introduced are “making a difference in preventing joint destruction.”

Practicing medicine as part of The Evangelical Alliance Mission “is a sense of calling” for Armistead, who grew up in Mechanicsville and graduated from the Medical College of Virginia (now VCU School of Medicine) in 1991. He was helped by a Smith Scholarship for four years.



“I love caring for poor people, being part of a mission team and having the opportunity to express my faith,” he says. Armistead was led to mission work during a medical mission trip to Kenya while at the College of William & Mary. He assisted a surgeon who flew to remote regions to correct cleft palates.

Armistead chose family medicine as his specialty and now lives in Pakistan with his wife JoAnn and three sons. They are nearing the end of a 10-month furlough in Richmond where Armistead works at a VCU Medical School clinic treating poor patients.

Armistead is counting the days until he and his family return to Pakistan. As for the Smith Scholarship, he recalls “being grateful for it” and that “it let me get out of debt quickly so I could get to work overseas sooner.” 🌱

## What Do Smith Scholars Have in Common?

### All the recipients from 1952 to today:

- Were helped by the Florence L. Smith Medical Scholarship Fund from the Hampton Roads Community Foundation (formerly The Norfolk Foundation).
- Were on scholarship at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine (formerly Medical College of Virginia) or Eastern Virginia Medical School sometime between 1952 and today.
- Were long-time Virginia residents when they won the scholarship.
- Are committed to excellence and helping people through medicine.

## Thank You

We appreciate the 31 Smith Scholars who continued the legacy of Florence L. Smith last year by donating \$25,817 to the Foundation. We applaud the four Smith Scholars who have shared their plans for future bequests. We also thank Anthony Sakowski, M.D. and his wife Kate for hosting a Smith Scholar gathering at their Richmond home last fall.

To explore ways you can help future Smith Scholars, contact Lynn Neumann at [lneumann@hamptonroadscf.org](mailto:lneumann@hamptonroadscf.org) or (757) 622-7951. Learn more at [www.smithscholars.org](http://www.smithscholars.org).

# Dr. Robert Eldred Harris: Focusing on Healthy Moms and Babies

When Robert Eldred Harris, M.D. reflects on all the good things in his life, the Florence Smith Scholarship is among them. “It made a big difference,” says the 1957 graduate of the University of Virginia School of Medicine.

Today Harris is a retired Air Force obstetrician and gynecologist with a 34-page curriculum vita listing the 100 medical articles, 11 textbook chapters and three monographs he has written. Many report on Harris’ research into infections during pregnancy – a specialty of this Smith Scholar who lives in San Antonio. His work has led to good outcomes for countless mothers and babies who were his patients as well as those of physicians who learned from his research.

When Florence Smith came into Harris’ life, he was a senior at the University of Virginia in 1957 looking for a way to pay for medical school at UVA. As the son of a Bristol postal clerk who had cancer, Harris had financed undergraduate school with scholarships and summer construction jobs.

The Smith Scholarship paved the way for Harris to attend medical school. Harris augmented the four-year



scholarship with an Air Force scholarship and hospital and library jobs. Harris went on to earn a Ph.D. in microbiology from the Medical College of Virginia (now VCU School of Medicine). He chaired the obstetrics and gynecology department and the infectious disease committee at the medical center at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas before retiring in 1981 from the Air Force.

Harris then worked in private practice in San Antonio as a gynecologist until retiring in 2004. Today Harris is an elder in his church and does volunteer work at nursing homes and retirement centers. Several years ago he established a scholarship at VCU’s School of Medicine in honor of his grandfather, who graduated from the medical school and treated patients in the mountains of southwest Virginia for 50 years.

One catalyst for Harris starting the scholarship at VCU is the impact the Florence Smith scholarship made in his life.

## Society of Smith Scholars

### The Society of Smith Scholars formed in 2006

to foster bonds between Smith Scholars, raise visibility of the scholarship and find ways to increase the annual scholarship awards to keep pace with the rising cost of medical education.

We appreciate the commitment of the steering committee of the Society of Smith Scholars. All of them were helped by Florence Smith’s scholarship during medical school. They are:

**Bruce Bodner, M.D.**

Lions Medical Eye Bank medical director (based in Norfolk) UVA., 1971

**Edward Lilly, M.D.**

Retired Norfolk internist and gastroenterologist MCV/VCU, 1968

**Russell Evett, M.D.**

Retired Norfolk internal medicine physician MCV/VCU, 1957

**Alfred “Buzzy” Schulwolf, M.D.**

Retired Norfolk pediatrician UVA, 1958

**Marissa Galicia-Castillo, M.D.**

Norfolk geriatrician EVMS, 1997

## What’s New

The Norfolk Foundation, which provided most Smith Scholarships, merged in 2010 with The Virginia Beach Foundation. At the new Hampton Roads Community Foundation the Smith Scholarship tradition is alive and well.

This spring three Smith Scholars will graduate from medical school. Look for them to continue the commitment to excellence embodied by Smith Scholars who graduated in previous years. This fall at least three new Smith Scholars will become the latest beneficiaries of Florence Smith’s generosity.

## Connect With Us

We enjoyed our 2010 Smith Scholar gatherings in Norfolk and Richmond so much that we are planning a Charlottesville event in the fall for current and past Smith Scholars. If you want to be part of it, please contact Lynn Neumann at [lneumann@hamptonroadscf.org](mailto:lneumann@hamptonroadscf.org) or (757) 622-7951. Stay tuned for a celebration in Norfolk in 2012 for the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Florence L. Smith Medical Scholarship.