Disease Expert Wins MacArthur Fellowship

By Adriane A. Farmer

Wafa El-Sadr, renowned infectious disease specialist at Columbia University, has been named a 2008 MacArthur Fellow, an honor bestowed annually by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. One of 25 recipients, El-Sadr will receive $500,000 to use without restriction over the next five years.

Like other MacArthur fellows, El-Sadr received the news by phone and was completely stunned by the announcement. El-Sadr said, “I never imagined it, to be honest. I had no idea at all.”

El-Sadr holds multiple posts at Columbia. She is professor of epidemiology at Mailman School of Public Health, and founded and directs Mailman’s International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP) and the Center for Infectious Disease Epidemiologic Research (CIDER). She is also professor of epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health and affiliated Harlem Hospital Center.

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For more than two decades, El-Sadr has led the Division of Infectious Diseases at Columbia’s College of Physicians and Surgeons, and also professor of clinical medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and is the Herbert Wechsler Professor of Jurisprudence. For years, she kept the two fields separate, even maintaining different collections of books in London and New York. After all, what connection was there between military strategy and constitutional law?

“During the cold war,” Bobbitt said in a talk last month in New York, “the role of the military was to defeat enemy soldiers, and that was a big war in which the goal was no longer to protect civilians.”

But the events of 9/11 changed all that, Bobbitt said. “I wanted to introduce into military strategy the notion of protecting civilians against catastrophes, natural and man-made. That would require new strategies that could conflict with statutory protections.”

Bobbitt’s inquiry into how such conflicts between law and strategy could be avoided led, most recently, to his 2008 book Terror and Consent, which British historian Niall Ferguson described in The New York Times as “the most profound book to have been written on the subject of American foreign policy since the attacks of 9/11—indeed, since the end of the cold war.” (Bobbitt has been consulted by both the Obama and McCain campaigns, according to Richard Gardner, the Columbia Law professor who introduced him at the talk.)

Bobbitt’s was the first in a series of law school lectures on international law and policy issues facing the next president. During the talk, Bobbitt made clear that the dangers faced by American society are great. The war on terror, he said, has three components: a war against terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda; a global struggle to prevent the dissemination of weapons of mass destruction; and the protection of civilians against catastrophes, natural and man-made.

Despite the urgency of his message, Bobbitt, who was educated at Yale, Princeton and Oxford, was cool and composed during his noon lecture. He began his lecture with bits of poetry, as well as a disarming call to the students in his seminar, Terror and Consent: The Wars for the 21st Century, to skip the lecture and enjoy the sunny afternoon, since he was saying nothing they hadn’t already heard.

The remainder of the standing-room-only crowd crowded the back of the room.

University Provost Alan Brinkley Returns to Faculty

By Bridget O’Brien

Alan Brinkley, the University Provost since 2003, said he will step down at the end of this academic year. He will return to teaching and research at Columbia in 2010 after a year-long academic leave.

A noted scholar of 20th century American history, Brinkley holds the Allan Nevins Professorship in History and is the author of several books and a contributor to a number of publications. The provost is the University’s chief academic officer, responsible for developing and implementing academic plans and policies and supervising the faculty and research centers.

During Brinkley’s tenure, Columbia launched a number of initiatives, including the growth of the faculty, the launch of the new science building, a review of undergraduate education and the increasing globalization of the University.

Also on his watch was the creation of the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity Initiatives, which is charged with making the University more diverse through its hiring of faculty, administration and officers of research.

In addition, he also oversaw development of the Office of Work/Life, this unit promotes awareness and utilization of policies and programs to create a family friendly environment at Columbia.

“Thank God I’m proud of what I’ve done, but I’m very proud to be part of them.”

Alan Brinkley played a part in the really big things that have happened in the last five-plus years,” he said. “All these are projects that are not mine alone, but I’m very proud to be part of them.”

www.columbia.edu/news
If there were any evil influences lurking around campus, they are likely gone after elaborately garbed monks from the kingdom of Bhutan performed demon-subjugation dances, known as cham, on Sept. 16. The performance on Low Plaza, co-sponsored by the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, was in celebration of the opening of “The Dragon’s Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan” at the Rubin Museum of Art. Cham dances are both a form of danced yoga in tantric Buddhism and a means of communicating Buddhist teachings.

PLAZA PURIFICATION

Going to the Chapel

Dear Alma,
How can one "in the know" at Columbia’s St. Paul’s Chapel? I’ve heard that the waiting list for a wedding date can be as long as four years.

— The Wedding Planner

Dear Planner,
St. Paul’s Chapel is a popular site for weddings, as well as for other non-nuptial events sponsored by campus and community organizations. That can make it tricky for couples set on a particular wedding date. The good news is that—despite the rumors—there is no four-year waiting list. But you may have to wait a year to get the exact date you want.

First, though, some history courtesy of architecture professor Andrew Dolkart. Although a chapel figured prominently in the master architectural plans when Columbia moved to Morningside Heights, no funding was available for it, and the chapel wasn’t part of the original campus that opened in 1877. In 1903, philanthropist Oliva Egleston Phelps Stokes and Caroline Phelps Stokes offered to finance the construction of a chapel (to be designed by their nephew). In 1966, the chapel was among the first buildings designated an official landmark by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Today, St. Paul’s operates primarily to accommodate students and University affiliates, but it is open to the public and hosts several events geared toward community outreach such as the Common Meal and Music at St. Paul’s programs. So how does one (or two, rather) get to stand at the chapel’s altar? The key to nabbing an open spot on the calendar is to plan ahead. St. Paul’s is more heavily booked during the academic year, when student organizations and campus activities compete for use of the chapel. In fact, student groups and activities have priority over private wedding reservations at the chapel.

During summer months, weekday weddings are allowed only on Fridays, with time slots throughout the day, while Sunday weddings are allowed only on Saturdays, as long as the ceremony ends by 5:00 p.m. During the academic year, weekday weddings are allowed only on Fridays, with time slots throughout the day, while Sunday weddings are allowed only on Saturdays, as long as the ceremony ends by 5:00 p.m. Weekend availability is the same as during the summer.

There are no restrictions on who can get married in the chapel. It is open to anyone in the community, not just Columbia affiliates.

— Kelvin X. Dumé
Send your questions for Alma’s Owl to carecord@columbia.edu

ASK ALMA’S OWL

MILESTONES

RONALD MINGYI, the Maurice V. Russell Professor of Social Policy and Social Welfare, has been selected a member in the New York State Juvenile Justice Task Force. This newly created organization will review and reform New York State policies and practices for providing care and custody to incarcerated youth. The initiative aims to transform the state’s juvenile justice system by developing a community-based, rehabilitative model that can be copied by other states seeking similar reforms.

WALLACE S. BROECKER, a geochemist and global climate concern advocate, has been awarded the Balzan Prize for his contributions to the understanding of climate change. The 888,000 prize is presented to honor outstanding science, culture and humanitarian initiatives that advance world peace. The Milan-based Balzan Prize Foundation said, “His contributions have been significant in understanding both gradual and abrupt climate changes.” Broecker, who is often credited with inventing the term “global warming,” is the Newberry Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences and has received numerous honors for his research.

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Dominican Leader Sees Role Model
In Columbia-Assisted Public School

By Melanie A. Farmer

It is not often middle school students can hear directly from a world leader. On Sept. 25, the students at Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering (CSS) got their chance when Leonel Fernández, president of the Dominican Republic, came to visit.

President Fernández spoke to a packed auditorium of about 250 students, parents and faculty, discussing politics and answering such questions as: What is the most difficult thing about being president? "Managing conflicts," he replied. What would he be if he weren’t president? A writer, he said.

Fernández was in New York City for the opening of the U.N. General Assembly and was also a featured speaker at the University’s annual World Leaders Forum. His trip to CSS stemmed from a key component of his presidential agenda: investing in the Dominican Republic’s youth and education.

“One of our priorities to promote economic and social development has to do with human capital, so that’s education,” said Fernández in an interview. “But we have to look at new models to train our young students how to think, how to solve problems, how to have a modern view, how to think out of the box… CSS is a great model project that we can replicate.”

To that end, Fernández also went to Teachers College for a meeting with Provost Thomas James; he is not a Teachers College alumnus, said Fernández’s visit “is a unique opportunity for my Hispanic students to see [how] somebody from the barrio…through hard work and dedication, was able to drive himself to the top, to the pinnacle of political power in the Dominican Republic and become president.”

The lesson was not lost on Christian Pimentel, a Dominican-born seventh-grader. Being able to meet the president of his country was a “true inspiration,” he said. Pimentel is concerned that Dominican voices are not being heard. “Latinos are just as important as everyone else,” he said. “We want to make sure everyone knows that…we have a say in this world.”

Some students got to have their say. In preparation for the visit, students were asked to write a letter addressing a world leader on a global issue, and several read theirs aloud to Fernández, topics included the U.S. financial crisis, nuclear weapons, oil dependency, climate change, poverty, health care and women’s rights.

For one student, sixth-grader Annette Anderson, the experience made her proud. “A lot of other schools locally never had an opportunity like this,” said Anderson. 11. “This really helps us and builds us up as a community and as a school.”

Double Discovery Gets New Director

As a graduate student at Southern Illinois University, Muriel A.S. Grimmett tutored Upward Bound students while finishing her master's degree in counseling. That experience, advising low-income high school students trying to get into college, jump-started a career in community outreach and education.

And that, in turn has led Grimmett to Columbia, where she is the new executive director of the Double Discovery Center, overseeing the center’s many programs, including Upward Bound.

Double Discovery, which provides academic support for local students who are first generation college bound, named Grimmett effective Sept. 8. She succeeds Olger C. Twyner, who became an associate vice president at Xavier University in New Orleans.

Grimmett, 56, is a specialist in multicultural and African American studies. Throughout her career she has focused on issues relating to higher education access for low income students. She previously was deputy executive director of the TRIO program at University of Nevada-Las Vegas (UNLV). TRIO is the umbrella title for several federal, educational outreach programs like Upward Bound.
NEW PROFESSORS ON CAMPUS
A sample of this year’s new faculty members

ARTS AND SCIENCES
As Columbia’s first Denning Family Professor of Sustainable Development, Ruth DeFries plans to establish an undergradu- ate major in sustainable development at Columbia. DeFries was previously a professor at the University of Maryland-College Park, with joint appointments in the Department of Geography and the Earth, System Science Interdisci- plinary Center.

Ruth DeFries

Jerry McManus, professor of earth and environmental sciences, was an associate scientist at Woods Hole Oceano- graphic Institution in Massachusetts. He specializes in paleo- oceanoGraphy, the study of past ocean circulation and climate.

Also a professor of earth and environmental sciences, Terry Plank joins Columbia from Boston University, where she was a professor of earth sciences. A petrologist- geochronologist, Plank’s work focuses on the study of magmas associated with the earth’s plate tectonic cycle.

In the humanities and social sciences, Stathis Gourgouris rejoins Columbia as a professor of classics and English and comparative literature, and will also direct the Institute for Comparative Literature and Culture at Columbia, which pro- motes the study of literature, culture and their social context. A poet, Gourgouris most recently taught comparative literature at the University of California-Los Angeles.

Elisheva Carlebach joins the Department of History this fall as the Sado Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society. At Queens College and the Graduate Center-CUNY, she was professor of history and focused on Jewish separatism and the Jews of early modern Europe.

Souleymane Bachir Diagne joins Columbia from Northwestern University as professor of French and philosophy. Academically trained in France, he is writing a book on Islam and philosophy, and his teaching interests include the history of early modern philosophy, philosophy and Sufism in the Islamic world, African philosophy and literature, and 20th century French philosophy.

The economics department has hired eight new professors and assistant professors, as it expands the number and breadth of courses taught in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and quantitative methods and the number of staff teaching macroeconomics.

The new professors include Ricardo Reis, who comes to Colum- bia from Princeton University and specializes in monetary policy and business cycles; Martin Uribe and Stephanie Schmitt- Grohe, from the University of Iowa. He specializes in the multiscale and physics of civil engineering materials and structures with experimental, analytical and numerical methods. His research interests range from structures and materials to innovative construction technologies and test methods.

MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health joined an elite new faculty in a number of divisions, including professors-who-are-returning-to-the-school-a-second-time Lynne B. Sagalyn, the Earle W. Kazis and Benjamin Schore Professor of Real Estate, has returned to Columbia after teaching at Wharton for the past five years. Lynne Sagalyn, who first joined the school in 1982, specializes in real estate fi- nance and urban development.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
Sankar Ghosh, a world re- knowned immunologist and mi- crobiologist, is joining Columbia University Medical Center as the chair of the department of mi- crobiology. Ghosh was a profes- sor at Yale University School of Medicine in the department of immunobiology as well as the department of molecular bio- physics and biochemistry. There, he became known for his discovery of the A-like ap- parat-kappa B (NF-kB), which plays a critical role in regulat- ing a number of genes involved in inflammatory and im- mune processes.

Joel Stein, an expert on strokes, was named chief of a coordinated program in rehabilitation medicine at Columbia University Medical Center, Weill Cornell Medical College and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. Stein currently is the chief medical officer for Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Bos- ton and an associate professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School.

THE FU FOUNDATION SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & APPLIED SCIENCE
Elon Terrell, assistant profes- sor of mechanical engineering, comes to the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sci- ence (SEAS) at Carnegie Mellon University, where he completed his Ph.D. Terrell, who also studied at the University of Texas at Austin, is primarily interested in thermal- fluid sciences, energy and tribology (the study of friction, lubrication and wear).

Rui Castro joins the electrical engineering department as assistant professor, with research interests primarily in learning theory, network inference and pattern recognition applications. Prior to Columbia, Castro was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and before that, at Rice University as a research assistant.

Haim Waisman comes to the Department of Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics as assistant professor from Global Engineering & Materials Inc., where he served as a senior research scientist. His research areas include computational solid methods, fatigue and fracture mechanics and composite materials. After studying in Israel, Waisman went on to earn his Ph.D. at a Ben-Gurion Polytechnic Institute.

Joining Waisman in the same department at Columbia is Huaming Yin as professor of mechanical engineering. Yin studied in China before completing his Ph.D. in structural mechanics at the University of Iowa. He specializes in the multiscale and physics of civil engineering materials and structures with experimental, analytical and numerical methods. His research interests range from structures and materials to innovative construction technologies and test methods.

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL
Columbia Business School added 15 new faculty members in a num- ber of divisions, including professors-who-are-returning-to-the-school-a-second-time Lynne B. Sagalyn, the Earle W. Kazis and Benjamin Schore Professor of Real Estate, has returned to Columbia after teaching at Wharton for the past five years. Lynne Sagalyn, who first joined the school in 1982, specializes in real estate fi- nance and urban development.

Other new full-time faculty include Piere Gellin- Dufresne, the Canone Family Professor of Business, who worked three years as a senior portfolio manager in the Quantitative Strategies Group of Goldman Sachs Asset Management and has taught at the Hask School of Business at the University of California-Berkeley.

Wouter Deesin, professor of finance and economics, comes to the Business School after serving as assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago’s Graduate School of Business. Daniel Wolfenzon, also professor of finance and economics, joins Columbia from New York University Stern School of Business, where he has taught finance since 2004.

COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL
Ted Shaw, former head of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, is joining Columbia Law School as a professor of professional practice. Shaw, a 1979 graduate of the school, will teach classes in civil procedure and constitutional law. He was lead counsel in a coalition that represented African American and Latino students in a landmark University of Michigan undergraduate affirmative-action admissions case. Shaw worked from 1979 to 1982 as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

Alexandra Carter (LAW’03) has joined as associate clinical professor in the law school’s Mediation Clinic, where Columbia students participate in various court and community-dispute resolution programs in the city. Carter is an associate attorney at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, where she has served on a team defending against a multi-billion-dollar securities class-action lawsuit related to Enron Corp.

Jamil Greene, associate professor of law, will teach courses related to constitutional law and federal courts. A former journalist, Greene’s expertise is the political construc- tion of constitutional law. He has clerked for the Hon. Guido Calabresi of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, in New Haven, and for Justice John Paul Stevens at the U.S. Supreme Court during the 2006-07 term.

Columbia alumna Trevor Morrison (LAW’98) returns to his alma mater after five years at Cornell Law School, where he was most recently an associate professor. Morrison, now professor of law, is a leading expert in the area of powers, federal- ism and executive branch legal interpretation.

International tax law expert Michael Graetz, who will join the law school in 2009, is currently the Justus S. Hotch- kiss Professor of Law at Yale Law School. Graetz has made substantial contributions to virtually every aspect of tax law and policy. He served in the U.S. Department of the Treasury and then again as deputy assistant secretary (tax policy) and as assistant to the secretary and special counsel during the George W.H. Bush administration.

THE JOURNALISM SCHOOL
Columbia Journalism School named Bill Grueskin, formerly a deputy managing editor of The Wall Street Journal, its dean for academic affairs. Grueskin, who in an earlier journal job had been editor of the paper’s online edition, will help build a new curriculum at Columbia that will broaden the J-school’s curriculum and research capacities. He also will serve as a pro- fessor of professional practice.

As part of the shift toward new media, Duy Linh Tu was named an assistant professor of professional practice and a new media coordinator. Duy, who had been an adjunct at the journalism school, is also creative director of Revolution Seven, a commercial, documentary and DVD production studio. He is also a writer and multimedia consultant who travels to newsrooms internationally to consult and train multimedia journalists.

Howard French was named an associate professor. He joined the journalism school after 22 years at The New York Times, where he was a foreign correspondent covering such far-flung places as Central America and the Caribbean, West Africa, Japan and the Koreas, as well as China. In the last three years, he also was a weekly columnist on global affairs for the International Herald Tribune.

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
William (Bill) B. Worthen joined as the new chair and professor of theater and dance at the Brady Pels Mellon in the Arts at Barnard College with a concurrent appointment in the theatre program at the School of the Arts. Worthen is teaching a range of courses in dance and performance theory, modern theatre, Shakespeare and performance. Prior to this appointment, he served as a visiting professor here and has taught at numerous universities including the University of Michigan, the University of California at Berkeley and Middlebury College.
A new study by researchers at the Mailman School of Public Health helps dispel a persistent belief that the vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine causes autism.

"We found no connection between autism and the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine," said W. Ian Lipkin, senior author of the study and director of the Mailman School’s Center for Infection and Immunity. Lipkin is also the John Snow Professor of Epidemiology and professor of neurology and of pathology.

The results come amid an alarming rise in autism cases, as some parents have forgotten the vaccine needed for their children’s part of the autism link. From Jan. 1 through July 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) received 131 reports of confirmed measles virus infections in the United States, the highest number for the same time period since 1997. Of these cases, 91 percent occurred in individuals who had not been vaccinated or had unknown vaccination status.

Measles is a serious, highly contagious disease, which spreads when people touch or breathe in infectious droplets passed by coughing or sneezing. It is the most deadly of all childhood rash/fever illnesses, according to the CDC. Before the measles vaccine was introduced in 1963, three to four million people contracted measles each year—400 to 500 died, 48,000 developed chronic disability. The MMR vaccine, a combined vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella viruses, is the safest protection against measles, the CDC says.

In 1998, a small study of children with autism raised the question of a link between the neurotransystemic condition and the MMR vaccine. The researchers suggested that vaccination with MMR caused gastrointestinal (GI) problems in the children, which then led to autism. (Most of the researchers, however, later retracted the study’s interpretations, stating that the data weren’t sufficient to establish this link.) Additional studies in 2002 found evidence of measles virus in the intestines of children with autism, but not in the intestinal biotype tissues from normal control children.

Since then, other epidemiologic studies have found no associations between the MMR vaccine and autism, but no subsequent research had tested for the presence of measles virus in intestinal tissues of children with autism and GI problems, nor did they examine the temporal relationship of MMR, GI problems and autism. The absence of such research may have contributed to persistent concerns over the vaccine, influencing parents’revolutions to vaccinate or not, and contributing to the increased outbreaks of measles.

In Mailman’s case-control study, scientists at the school’s Center for Infection and Immunity and researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital, Trinity College Dublin and the CDC evaluated bowel tissue from 5 children with GI disorders and autism and 13 children with GI disturbances but without neurodevelopmental problems for the presence of measles virus RNA. In the study, the presence of measles virus was no more likely in children with autism and GI disturbances, than in children with only GI disturbances. Evidence of measles virus was found in only one case and one control, at levels just above the threshold for detection.

“We also found no relationship between autism and the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, and autism and GI disorders,” said Mady Hornig, associate professor of epidemiology, director of translational research in Mailman’s Center for Infection and Immunity, and lead author of the study. “Further research is necessary to ascertain whether measles virus infection is associated with autism and GI disturbances.”

Despite these advances, Eyal says autism therapies are still unobtainable for many children who need them, because many medical insurance plans don’t cover them.

Now, some states are pushing insurance companies to adopt autism treatments. “The available therapies improve lives by improving functioning, and this has led to societal acceptance,” Eyal says. “It’s become imperative for treatment to be extended to all children who need it, regardless of their diagnosis.”

A sharp spike in autism rates over the last 20 years has experts and parents alike wondering about the cause of the disability.

To Columbia sociology Professor Gil Eyal, however, the increase in autism cases is not as sweeping as the numbers suggest. His research shows that the increase has occurred because, for more than half a century, the condition was misclassified as mental retardation. Indeed, the rise in autism cases has coincided with a drop in the number of diagnosed cases of mental retardation.

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A simple blood test to detect whether a person might develop Alzheimer’s disease is within sight and could change the way the disease is treated someday prevent it, Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) researchers say.

Building on a study that started 20 years ago with an elderly population in Northern Manhattan at risk or in various stages of developing the debilitating neurological condition, the Columbia research group has yielded promising findings. The results indicate that by looking at blood, doctors may be able to detect a patient’s predisposition to developing the dementia-inducing disease that robs a patient of memory and ability to carry out tasks essential to life. That could eventually help scientists in their quest toward reversing the disease’s onset.

Results suggest that individuals with elevated levels of a certain peptide in the blood plasma, Amyloid Beta 42 (Aß42), are at increased risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease, and that a subsequent decline of Aß42 in the bloodstream may reflect a compartmentalization, or “traffic jam,” of Aß42 in the brain, which occurs in the brains of people with Alzheimer’s.

In the study, researchers found that plasma levels of Aß42 appear to increase before the onset of Alzheimer’s disease and then decline shortly after the onset of dementia. Researchers surmise that Aß42 may become trapped in the brain, which could account for the lowered levels post-dementia.

The principal investigator on the study, Richard Mayeux, professor of neurology, psychiatry and epidemiology and co-director of the Taub Institute for Research on Alzheimer’s Disease and the Aging Brain at CUMC, likens the finding to something similar that is seen in heart attack patients, who typically have elevated lipid levels in their bloodstream prior to a heart attack, but post-heart attack lipid levels may decrease.

While these findings in Alzheimer’s may be monitored throughout the disease course, clinicians have had no reliable way to monitor the pathologic progression of the disease. Being able to reliably measure Aß42 levels in the blood could provide clinicians with a tool that forecasts the onset of Alzheimer’s much earlier.

Eyal and other researchers believe a blood test could be an important step in combating the disease, “said Nicole Schupf, associate professor of clinical epidemiology at CUMC and lead author of the study.

Other authors on the paper from CUMC include Ming X. Tang, Jennifer Manly and Howard Andrews. The Department of Immunology at the New York State Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities also contributed to the research.

**Study Finds No Link Between Measles Vaccine and Autism**

**Professor Finds Historical Context for Recent Autism Surge**

**Blood Test Could Detect Early Signs of Alzheimer’s**

**The Record**

**October 2, 2008**
complishments, but she is most proud of having developed a comprehensive program to serve the needs of a diverse set of patients suffering with HIV/AIDS or other infectious diseases. Under her directorship at ICAP, more than 500,000 people are receiving care in some 600 ICAP-supported sites in 14 countries across sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

“Unfortunately a lot of interventions to date have been piecemeal, focusing on the individual rather than the family, or what a doctor can do rather than a health team can do,” said El-Sadr. “Rather than just thinking of medicine and the clinical need, we go beyond that.”

All of her programs consider a variety of societal components to patient care and treatment, she said, including issues of discrimination or stigma, issues related to social support, or even helping people find income-generating activities.

El-Sadr cites a broad range of MacArthur grant recipients this year, including an astronaut, an urban farmer, a geriatrician and a saxophonist, ranging in age from 30 to 76. All were selected for their creativity, originality and potential to make important contributions in the future. Two other Columbians were named MacArthur fellows in recent years, including Ruth DeFries, professor of sustainable development who won last year, and Patricia J. Williams, professor of law, a 2000 recipient.

MacArthur Fellows are not aware they are even being considered for the grant. Nominations for a MacArthur, often referred to as the “genius grant,” are accepted only from invited nominators, a list that is constantly renewed throughout the year. A 12-member selection committee serves anonymously and typically names between 20 and 25 recipients annually.

Born and raised in Cairo, Egypt, El-Sadr earned her medical degree from Cairo University, a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School and a master’s of public health degree in epidemiology from the Mailman School.

When asked how she plans to spend the $500,000 grant, El-Sadr said, “I want to think about how I can use this to stimulate new work with a lot of colleagues around the world; to try to find solutions to so many public health problems.”

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Fore Columbus Globetrotters, More Sites on the Map for Dual Degrees

S

students who want a degree from Columbia Univer-

ity and from an institution overseas don’t have to

choose one over the other. And now, under a series

of recent cross-border arrangements with other universi-
ties, there are more ways than ever for students to earn

an additional master’s or bachelor’s degree from a variety

of overseas partners.

These dual degree programs, which allow students to

graduate from the same course of study with degrees from
two separate institutions, are a part of an effort to interna-
tionalize Columbia teaching and research in an increasingly
interconnected world. This latest crop extends on existing
opportunities already offered by Colum-
bia College, the School of Interna-
tional and Public Affairs, Columbia Business School and the Department of
History.

For example, the Columbia-Paris Alliance Program gives students the ability to earn a dual degree from Columbia and any of three French
partners institutions: The École Poly-
technique, Sciences Po and the Uni-

versity of Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne.

These dual degree opportunities are

offered across several schools and departments, including one for a master of museum studies between the art history departments at Co-
lumbia and the University of Paris. In

addition to a master of public affairs between Sci-
ences Po, SIPA, LSE and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. The Alliance
Program in 2009 will offer a dual doctoral degree in political science and is currently working on a dual degree offering
in African studies.

Columbia Law School has dual-degree

programs with Sciences Po, the Sorbonne and University of London, among others.

In June, Columbia Business School launched the EMBA-

Global Asia, a new executive MBA program that gives students an MBA conferred by three institutions: Columbia, London Business School and the University of Hong Kong. Columbia Business School hopes to recruit 50 students to its inaugural class of May 2009, most being execu-
tives and managers based in Asia. The joint curriculum will be taught in Hong Kong/Shanghai, London and New York.

“Recent events have highlighted just how fast-moving

and interconnected the world’s business environment has become,” says Elihan Hanbury, associate dean of the executive programs at the business school, referring to the U.S.

financial crisis. “These programs extend Columbia Business School’s presence to regions of the world that are playing an increasingly important role in the global economy.”

Meanwhile, budding journalists at Columbia’s School of Journalism can craft their reporting skills in New York and Paris starting this fall through a new dual-degree offering with France’s Graduate Journalism Program at Sciences Po. Columbia students at Sciences Po will also be placed in internships with Paris-based news and media organizations.

“Sciences Po shares our belief in the value of graduate-level university professional education for journalists and in the importance of giving journalists an international perspec-
tive,” Nicholas Lemann, dean of Columbia’s journalism school, said when the joint-degree program was announced.

At The Fu Foundation School of Engineer-
ing and Applied Science (SEAS), the school has created a new position: director of global initiatives and education. Whoever fills the job will be charged with pursuing educational partnerships with international universities.

SEAS is hoping to finalize an agreement later this year with École Polytechnique in Paris that will award students a bachelor’s de-
gree from Columbia and a master’s from Poly-
technique. Columbia engineering students will spend the first three years in New York, then travel to Paris for their fourth and fifth years in order to complete the master’s from the French university.

SEAS has for more than a decade provided a dual-degree option for French students through its depart-

ment of industrial engineering and operations research. About 30 students a year take advantage of the program. Also in the final stages of approval is a dual-degree offering that will award a professional degree in financial engineering through the school’s department of industrial engineering and operations research to students enrolled jointly at SEAS and the Sorbonne University. Columbia engineering students can make the switch to the master’s program at the Sorbonne in order to complete the dual degree.

These programs “are gaining importance because the em-

phasis is on developing a more global perspective, and the opportunities for engineering worldwide are increasingly emerging abroad,” says Gerald Navratil, interim dean at SEAS and the Thomas Alva Edison Professor of Applied Phys-

ics. “Students of ours who get the exposure of a more global perspective have an advantage.”

COLUMBIA PEOPLE

Jyoti Ranadive

WHO SHE IS: Executive assistant to senior vice provost Stephen Rittenberg.

YEARS AT COLUMBIA: Eight

WHAT SHE DOES: Ranadive wears multiple hats helping the senior vice provost in handling all aspects of academic administration, including evaluating new academic program proposals and Presidential Teaching Awards.

A GOOD DAY ON THE JOB: “A good day is when I know that I have solved a problem for, or answered a question from, administrators and faculty from all divisions and departments of the University. It is also a good day when I am able to answer, ‘I have already taken care of that.’ ”

BEFORE COLUMBIA: Prior to joining Columbia in 2000, Ranadive was an adjunct professor in sociology at New York University, City University of New York and Ramatol Valley Community College in North Branch, N.J. She has spent more than 15 years in university settings and in international organizations in Sweden, India and Ethiopia. “I enjoyed teaching and research,” she said, and her areas of interest included tribal education and the impact of modernization on women. “When my husband, who earned all his degrees from Columbia, proposed returning to New York City [from New Jersey], joining the Columbia community seemed an easy decision.”

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT: “The master of arts con-

vocation of 2005 stands out. Just before the diplomas were handed out, the Graduate School of Arts and Science[ ] Dean Henry Pinkham commended me for running the program single-handed after the dean for MA, programs resigned. I ran the MBA. Dean’s Office and the [Liberal Studies Master of Arts Program], and my graduating students broke into a sustained applause, which stopped only when I stood up to acknowledge them. Naturally, that was very gratifying for me and touched me in a personal way.”

“In her spare time: In India, Ranadive acted on the stage and in a feature film. But these days, she says she is happy to be in the audience. She loves spending Sunday mornings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with her husband. She also enjoys playing and baseball (she’s a Yankees fan). Baseball is a good substitute for cricket, which is her first love. “I am passionate about all my interests and baseball is no exception.”

—By Adrienne Blount
FRED M. SSEWAMALA

POSITION: Associate Professor of Social Work, School of Social Work
Associate Professor of International Affairs, School of International and Public Affairs

JOINED FACULTY: July 2003

HISTORY: Senior research fellow, New America Foundation (current)
Visiting professor, Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at the University of California-San Francisco

Interview by Melinda A. Farmer

Fred Ssewamala knows firsthand the challenges tied to overcoming poverty and war. He was orphaned at the age of 12 after watching the murder of his parents, eldest brother, sister and niece in the height of civil unrest in Uganda. He survived through the support of relatives, academic scholarships and his own perseverance. Now Ssewamala is helping Ugandans like himself.

Ssewamala, associate professor of social work and international affairs, has combined his past and present to develop economic empowerment programs that help hundreds of children and families in Uganda. The SUUBI programs (SUUBI means hope in Lugandan) are based on an asset-building model where children and their families are encouraged to start savings accounts with a local financial institution, and their contributions are matched through the grants Ssewamala receives. The money in the matched savings account helps pay for the children to attend high school or start a small business.

Most of the savers have never had a bank account and are wary of big financial institutions. Ssewamala’s program helps families and children get used to the idea, and it makes them active participants—a key component to the program. “The beauty of this model is that it’s a partnership,” Ssewamala says. “You’re not simply giving them handouts, but you’re telling them, ‘When you participate, we participate.’”

These families and children get used to the idea, and it makes them active participants—a key component to the program. “The beauty of this model is that it’s a partnership,” Ssewamala says. “You’re not simply giving them handouts, but you’re telling them, ‘When you participate, we participate.’”

“How now at Columbia, and I’m able to give back to communities that helped me.”

Q. How did the idea for these programs come to you?
A. I was trained by Michael Sherraden at Washington University. He is the father of asset theory, which states that when people own assets they’re more likely to think and behave differently. If you’re working with these orphaned children and they have no sense of hope, or they’re not even dreaming that things will be better tomorrow, the question is: Why should they concentrate on school? Why should they not get involved in risk-taking behaviors? There must be something you can create realistically in their lives for them to think and behave differently. Using the same theory, I looked at poor families in the U.S. who are benefiting from individual development accounts and I saw how important these accounts were to these families, and how they were changing their lives and how they started to think about the future, like saving for college, or starting a small business. And, and how they were changing their lives and how they started to think about the future, like saving for college, or starting a small business.

Q. What is it about the field that you enjoy the most?
A. Because I’ve been helped by people and by communities. I needed a profession that was a “helping” profession. Social work by definition is a “helping” profession. Social work by definition is a “"helping” profession. Social work by definition is a “helping” profession.

Q. What have been the surprises?
A. The parents and caregivers for these kids have started organizing themselves in these communities and demanding for services which were missing for the most part in these areas. For example, they have now asked their banks to bring deposit machines to their villages so that they don’t have to spend money to go 10 miles from their village to make the deposits. They’re calculating that each time they take a taxi [to the bank] they’re losing money—now they’re asking for services to be brought closer to their villages which is really very empowering.

Q. What is it about the field that you enjoy the most?
A. Because I’ve been helped by people and by communities. I needed a profession that was a “helping” profession. Social work by definition is a “helping” profession.

Q. What do you do with the kids once they have an account?
A. We work with a few faith-based institutions in Uganda to identify the schools where we should work. Most of the kids are age 12 to 16 and have lost one or both parents, and we [work] with community organizations to find the orphaned children in the last two years of their primary education. Why was it important for you to do work in Uganda?

Q. Why was it important for you to do work in Uganda?
A. I know you can make a difference, even if it’s a small difference, even if you only help one child. That one child can help two and those two can go on to help four. I was the only one in my family—the youngest—who has gone this far. And now here I am writing proposals, planning big programs, which have not only implications for the communities where I’m working but also implications for Uganda and Africa. And this is one person. Each time you help a person, you’re not helping just that one person, you’re helping the community, you’re helping the village, you’re helping the nation and eventually helping the world. One person can make a big difference.
crowd of about 120 listened closely as Bobbitt described the enemy, which he says is global, networked and inclined to privatize its operations—a mirror of the society it is determined to terrorize.

According to Bobbitt, the law has to provide new methods of surveillance, compelling suspects to divulge information and detaining those who pose a danger. He called the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)—the Nixon-era law governing wiretapping of Americans, recently amended amid controversy—“totally obsolete and foolish” given advances in communications technology. That position will not endear him to liberals, nor will his support for the idea of preemptive war. “Don’t let anyone tell you that preemptive war is unlawful,” he said. “Preemption is acceptable in the face of an imminent attack.”

Yet Bobbitt is hardly an apologist for the Bush administration. In the war on terror, he said, “the population understands that you have to deceive your enemy. This administration has deceived not just the enemy but the American public.” He cited the administration’s illegal surveillance of Americans and its abandonment of the principles of habeas corpus. “I believe the idea that we should strip people of habeas corpus is ludicrous. The government,” he said, “cannot operate without giving us rights.”

Instead of being ignored, he said, the law can be modified to fit changing circumstances—something it is able to do with help from scholars like Bobbitt. After 9/11, he said, “I felt bereft that we did not have at our disposal the ideas we needed.” His research is an attempt to fill those gaps.

“You don’t just want a nation to be free to live,” he said. “You want it to be free to live without fear of its own government.”