Jimmy Kimmel, late-night talk show host and comedian, will be the featured speaker at the Keck School of Medicine of USC class of 2019 commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 11, at the Galen Center on USC’s University Park Campus. Kimmel will address students, faculty and families from the Keck School MD program at the school’s 134th commencement.

While renowned for his talk show and comedic work, Kimmel also has a long history of using his fame and platforms on television and social media to raise awareness and funds for many charitable organizations. He is a well-known advocate for national health care for all.

“Jimmy Kimmel is a powerful advocate of health care and has helped raise awareness of critical issues, while putting a high-profile face to the many families that undergo health crises of their own,” said Laura Mosqueda, MD, dean of the Keck School and professor of family medicine.

Last year, Kimmel was honored by Children’s Hospital Los Angeles — which is staffed by Keck School faculty physicians — for his work in advocating for health care coverage for all children and families in the United States, following an emotional tribute to the facility after his newborn son was treated there.

“The Keck School is proud that our physicians were able to support the Kimmel family during a turbulent time. By sharing his family’s emotional and heartfelt journey with millions, Jimmy Kimmel touched countless lives and enlisted support for high-quality, innovative health care for all. We are deeply grateful to him for sharing his thoughts with our graduates,” Mosqueda said.

See a video announcing Kimmel as the Keck School 2019 MD commencement speaker at https://youtu.be/ZPdu-LGE1KM.
D’Juan Farmer, PhD
Postdoctoral Scholar – Fellowship Trainee, Gage Crump Lab
Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research

As a postdoctoral fellow in the Crump lab at the Broad CIRM Center, D’Juan Farmer’s aim is to uncover the mechanisms that control the establishment and maintenance of the stem cells that reside in important structures called sutures — structures that separate neighboring skull bones in the skull of zebrafish, mice and humans. By integrating zebrafish and mouse models to study these stem cells, he hopes to learn how to best treat the congenital defect craniosynostosis in humans.

Since arriving at USC, Dr. Farmer has received several competitive fellowships, including the HHMI Hanna H. Gray fellowship. He was drawn to the Keck School because of its world-class researchers in craniofacial development and stem cell biology. He believes the research being conducted in stem cell biology at the Keck School will provide pivotal insights that will improve how we treat human disease.

Christopher Foran, MD
Resident Physician

Christopher Foran came to USC knowing that he wanted to become a trauma surgeon and to use that platform to work toward social justice.

Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center has offered him the opportunity to work with populations who are often marginalized, forgotten or deemed expendable by society. Alongside his mentor, Dr. Damon Clark, Dr. Foran is active in providing gang tattoo removal to people in the community eager to change their lives.

A memorable experience in his time as a resident occurred when he was on trauma call. A young man with a serious gunshot wound endured a challenging surgery. When Dr. Foran came by to check on the patient, he met the patient’s mother. After explaining to her that her son would live, she began to cry and hugged him. This experience reminded him that surgeons not only care for patients but also carry with them the greatest hopes and fears of the people who love those patients.

Hayley Sayrs
Student, Master of Public Health

Hayley Sayrs is in her second semester of the Master of Public Health (MPH) program with a focus on policy. She recently began conducting research under Dr. Michael Cousineau, and with his encouragement, she led the initiative on conducting a baseline assessment of food insecurity on the Soto campus.

In the MPH program, Hayley is developing a “systems thinking” approach to problem-solving and is learning how to evaluate programs as well as public health interventions. Her goal is to continue working in the field of public health — bridging the gap that is widening between advanced technology in health care and equity/access to those services. After gaining more experience in the health sector, Hayley dreams to one day serve as an elected official, representing a health-centric perspective in politics that is grounded in social justice. While her main focus is on health disparities and sustainability, Hayley is also interested in social ventures.

Anna Ter-Zarkarian
Student, Dual MD/MBA Program

As part of the dual MD/MBA program with the Marshall School of Business, Anna Ter-Zarkarian conducted consulting projects in quality improvement initiatives for several health care institutions, including Keck Hospital of USC, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and Kaiser Permanente. For the past three years, she has also been actively engaged in helping the children of Armenia through the Armenian EyeCare Project, organizing and facilitating multiple medical mission trips to prevent and treat childhood blindness.

Anna points to the mission statement etched on the entrance of Historic General Hospital calling providers “to give their services without charge in order that no citizen of the county shall be deprived of health or life for lack of such care and services” as her guide. She hopes that her accomplishments reflect how she was able to honor that statement and provide compassionate care for all — regardless of origin or ability.
On the third Friday of every March — known to all medical students as Match Day — fourth-year medical students across the United States simultaneously experience the moment for which they have long worked. First, there is nervous anticipation. At 9 a.m., excitement builds as dozens of envelopes are ripped open all at once. Immediately after, shouts of joy erupt as they discover where they will be completing their residency.

March 15 brought the Keck School of Medicine of USC’s fourth-years to the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad on the Health Sciences Campus for 2019’s Match Day results. Sona Shah and Nina Gertsvolf, class presidents for this year’s graduates, shared the podium to thank the faculty, staff and administration for their support throughout their time at the Keck School.

Gertsvolf also took time to thank the patients that they had seen over the years, saying, “You have taught us how to be compassionate physicians, and how to make meaningful connections with those that we will serve in the future.”

Shah then chimed in, “Thank you to all of our friends and family members. Without your unwavering love, support and encouragement over the past four years, we would not be here today opening these envelopes.”

Karen Restifo, MD, JD, associate dean for student affairs, shared that 64 percent of the Keck School students were matched in California and 22 percent will join staff at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center. Internal medicine is again the top choice of specialty, with 31 students matching in that field.

Restifo closed by saying, “As a school, we are very proud and feel you’ve done incredibly well, and you should just take a moment. It was a lot of hard work on your part. The family and significant others, everyone who supported these students, you should give yourself a pat on the back.” She then welcomed USC’s equine mascot Traveler, who delivered the match envelopes.

Lloyd Camper was exuberant about his match, Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. “Miami was my No. 1 choice because of the way I interviewed there, I really fell in love with the program and the culture that they are upholding between the residents and the faculty. And you can’t go wrong with a location such as Miami.”

The National Resident Matching Program uses a complex algorithm to align the preferences of students with the criteria of teaching hospitals across the country.
FACULTY PROFILES

RICKY BLUTHENTHAL, PHD
Associate Dean for Social Justice
Professor of Preventive Medicine
Keck School of Medicine of USC

Ricky Bluthenthal, PhD, was appointed associate dean for social justice at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, effective Jan. 1. In this role, Dr. Bluthenthal is establishing a new Office for Social Justice within the medical school administration. The fundamental premise of such an office is that all people should receive basic benefits from the “institutions of society” based on justice, fairness and the advancement of the public good.

Specifically relating to health care, the Office of Social Justice may address such issues as community health, disparities in the provision of health services and treatment, fairness in public health policy and advocacy for the fair distribution of health services and treatment. An important second area of effort will be in the development of curricula for medical and graduate students that explore issues such as how social justice relates to access to health care and fairness in public health policy, as well as to develop opportunities for advocacy.

Through his research and community leadership, Dr. Bluthenthal has been an active participant in social justice reforms for minorities and disadvantaged members of society, with an emphasis on issues of access to health care and treatment for underrepresented groups.

BHUSHAN DESAI, MBBS, MS
Assistant Professor of Research Radiology
Keck School of Medicine of USC

Over the past decade, Bhushan Desai, MBBS, MS, has gone from being a student to his current role as the vice chair of research in the Department of Radiology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. The department, which is going through a period of growth and transformation, is developing novel imaging biomarkers, new imaging-based algorithms of care, best practices and guidelines that can be tailored to the most appropriate, cost-effective and beneficial care on a global basis.

When Dr. Desai began his role as the vice chair of research for radiology, there was just a small research division with approximately five-10 active research studies. Over the last three years, a change in culture was introduced — the department has grown its research division to more than 20 research staff and research faculty who manage approximately 70 funded clinical research studies. The research portfolio has diversified and the research revenue has increased fourfold. In the near future, there are plans to foster collaborative research at the institutional level by establishing additional forums — such as retreats, speaker series and journal clubs — to promote fruitful interaction between scientists across various disciplines.

KATHLEEN NELSON, MD
Associate Dean for Leadership and Wellness
Clinical Professor of Pediatrics
Keck School of Medicine of USC

Kathleen Nelson, MD, was appointed associate dean for leadership and wellness, Aug. 1.

Dr. Nelson coordinates and develops efforts in the areas of wellness and leadership for trainees, faculty and staff. She coordinates her work with other leaders at the Keck School, Keck Medicine of USC and Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, on programs that affect the lives and professional development of the Keck School community.

Dr. Nelson has been a guiding force in the Healthcare Leadership Academy, a joint venture developed in 2013 between CHLA and Keck Medicine to train academic health center leaders for the 21st century. Prior to accepting the associate dean role, Dr. Nelson was the associate chair for faculty development in the Department of Pediatrics at CHLA. She spent seven years as the senior associate dean for faculty development at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine.

Dr. Nelson also has a long history of service at the national level, particularly in her committee and leadership activities at the American Association for Medical Colleges, the Academic Pediatric Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.
FACULTY PROFILES

JO MARIE REILLY, MD, MPH
Professor of Clinical Family Medicine
Keck School of Medicine of USC

Jo Marie Reilly, MD, MPH, is the director of the Primary Care Initiative, the family medicine predoctoral director, and the senior family medicine student advisor for the Department of Family Medicine.

Dr. Reilly joined the Keck School in 2007 as the director of the professionalism and the practice of medicine course and the associate director of the Introduction to Clinical Medicine program. She co-founded the Primary Care Initiative through an HRSA grant in 2009, rebranding it in 2014. This initiative has created a multilevel primary care workforce pipeline program at the Keck School and has led to the development of a primary care certificate program for designated medical students.

The Keck School Primary Care Initiative engages all interested students in community-based, primary care research and leadership training, while exposing the Keck School faculty community to primary care. Since the inception of this program, the number of Keck School students going into family medicine has doubled.

She hopes that her clinical, teaching, and research experiences within the medical education arena have helped to lay the foundation for a vibrant and dynamic faculty and student community of primary care trainees who will serve the Los Angeles urban, underserved patient community.

NORAH TERRAULT, MD
Chief of the Division of Gastroenterology and Liver Diseases
Visiting Professor of Medicine
Keck School of Medicine of USC

Norah Terrault, MD, joined the Keck School of Medicine as the new division chief of gastroenterology and liver diseases on March 1. Beginning in 2009, Dr. Terrault served as the director of the Viral Hepatitis Center at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), where she was a professor of medicine and transplant surgery. Dr. Terrault focused her clinical and research activities on viral hepatitis and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. She founded UCSF’s Project Echo to train and support primary care physicians in Northern California to care for patients with hepatitis, with expanded plans to eliminate hepatitis C across California via her ECHO-PLUS program.

Dr. Terrault plans to amplify the division of gastroenterology and liver diseases’ training programs to provide trainees with greater opportunities to engage in education, and clinical and translational research. She encourages faculty and trainees to think globally in their endeavors and to leave a larger footprint that expands beyond Los Angeles.

A prolific physician-scientist, she has authored 330 peer-reviewed manuscripts, editorials and invited reviews, as well as U.S. national guidelines for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B and C.

JEFFREY TOLSTAD, MD, MMM
Senior Associate Dean for Organizational Development
Clinical Associate Professor of Medical Education
Keck School of Medicine

Jeffrey Tolstad, MD, MMM, was appointed to the new role of senior associate dean for organizational development at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, effective Nov. 1.

In his role as senior associate dean, Dr. Tolstad works with department chairs, administrators and other members of the dean’s leadership staff on special projects and initiatives, particularly those that relate to culture and values, recruitment strategies and funds flow development.

After receiving his medical degree from George Washington University, Dr. Tolstad served as assistant clinical professor and director of pediatric anesthesia at the University of California, Irvine and Irvine Medical Center. He then joined the medical staff at Elliot Hospital in Manchester, New Hampshire, serving as the medical director at the ambulatory surgery center and as chief of anesthesia at the hospital. In his administrative roles, Dr. Tolstad managed staff, introduced programs and instituted changes that increased efficiency and quality of service.

He has contributed administrative expertise to charitable endeavors as well, serving as medical director of the not-for-profit organization Vision International Missions in New Hampshire.
CARYN LERMAN ANNOUNCED AS USC NORRIS DIRECTOR

Caryn Lerman, PhD, recently joined the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, the highest-ranked cancer care provider in Southern California, as the center’s new director, effective March 15. She also holds the position of professor of psychiatry and the behavioral sciences at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Dr. Lerman comes from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where she currently serves as the John H. Glick Professor for Cancer Research and vice dean for strategic initiatives.

“I’m honored to return to USC and the Trojan family to lead such an outstanding cancer center with the mission of reducing the burden of cancer in Los Angeles and beyond,” said Dr. Lerman, who received a master’s degree in psychology and a doctoral degree in clinical psychology, both from USC. “We are at a pivotal moment in cancer research where remarkable scientific and clinical breakthroughs are changing the course of how we prevent, detect and treat this disease. With the exceptional talent, dedicated clinicians, entrepreneurial mindset and culture of inclusion throughout USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, there is no limit to what we can accomplish together.”

In announcing the appointment, Laura Mosqueda, MD, dean of the Keck School, noted Dr. Lerman’s extensive experience leading cancer centers and programs, as well as her nationally recognized cancer prevention research that has spanned the fields of neuroscience, pharmacology, genetics and behavioral science.

KATHRYN CARRICO NAMED VICE PRESIDENT FOR USC HEALTH SCIENCES ADVANCEMENT

After a national search, Kathryn “Kat” Carrico, an accomplished advancement professional with experience at several top academic medical centers, was named vice president for USC Health Sciences Advancement, effective Jan. 1.

Carrico leads efforts to generate support for the academic, research and clinical missions and priorities of the university’s medical enterprise, Keck Medicine of USC, and oversees advancement activities for Keck Hospital of USC, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, USC Verdugo Hills Hospital, and the 600-physician practice group known as USC Care Medical Group, Inc., as well as for the Keck School, including academic departments, research centers, institutes and programs.

She works closely with USC’s president, provost, vice presidents, deans, directors, faculty and staff across the university. She reports jointly to the senior vice president for University Advancement, the dean of the Keck School, and the senior vice president and chief executive officer for Keck Medicine.

“Kat Carrico has a passion for academic medicine that’s evident in her successful track record at several outstanding medical centers,” said Al Checcio, senior vice president for University Advancement. “We are excited about her vision for increasing philanthropic support for Keck Medicine and look forward to introducing her to our community in the new year.”

Carrico came to USC from the University of California, Los Angeles, where she served as associate vice chancellor for development.
The National Cancer Institute awarded a five-year, $16 million grant to create a cancer health equity center at USC and two partner institutions that will conduct research on cancer health disparities, train underrepresented minorities and perform community outreach.

USC will collaborate with the University of Florida and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, a historically black college. Leading the USC component are John Carpten, MD, professor and chair of the Department of Translational Genomics, and Mariana Stern, MD, professor of preventive medicine and urology.

USC will initially focus on the genomics and biological underpinnings of prostate and pancreatic cancer, which have high mortality in African-Americans and Latinos, to better understand the biology driving higher incidence and death rates.

Researchers will create a repository of biological specimens from African-American and Latino patients to help with this and future studies.

The cancer health differences among whites, and African-Americans or Latinos are stark. For all cancers combined, the death rate is 25 percent higher for African-Americans than for whites, according to the National Cancer Institute. Latinos have the highest rates for cancers associated with infection, such as liver, stomach and cervical cancers.

An important aspect of the bicoastal center, called CaRE2, is the chance to look at the genetics of cancer health disparities across its highly diverse communities in Florida and Southern California, Carpten said. These include American-born, African-born and Caribbean-born blacks, and Mexican-Americans, Caribbean Latinos, and Central and South Americans.

A key goal of the initiative is to diversify the research workforce focused on cancer and health disparities. The new center aims to train 125 young scientists, ranging from those who’ve just completed bachelor’s degrees, graduate students, postdoctoral students and early career scientists.

The USC Health Sciences Campus is located in one of the most dynamic and diverse communities in the world. The Keck School of Medicine of USC and Keck Medicine of USC are committed to listening, learning, understanding and collaborating with our local communities. In December 2018, the two organizations came together to launch the Keck Community Engagement website, a centralized repository that highlights these collaborations.

Faculty, staff and students have spearheaded a great number of programs that are wide-ranging and varied, including those in arts and entertainment, ones that provide health screenings and education, and programs that tackle issues of homelessness and mental health.

The site contains information and links to our programs, volunteer opportunities and community partners. To date, 55 programs have been added to the website. The hope is that this centralized, one-stop location will further strengthen the school's ongoing relationships with the communities around it and encourage further participation. By working together, the Keck School and Keck Medicine will advance health care knowledge and services in the surrounding neighborhoods.

To learn more, visit https://keck.usc.edu/community-engagement/.
ALUMNI, FACULTY HONORED AT 2019 SCHOLARSHIP GALA

More than 300 alumni, friends, donors and students gathered for the 2019 Scholarship Gala, held March 16 at the Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles. The Scholarship Gala honors exceptional students, faculty and alumni who highlight not only the best in academics and research, but also showcase the commitment to diversity and community involvement that stand as pillars of the Keck School of Medicine of USC’s core values. The long-standing event provides the unique opportunity for donors to meet with the students and faculty whom they are helping to support and encourage.

“At the Keck School of Medicine, we are focused on the future, and our future is bright,” said Keck School Dean Laura Mosqueda, MD. “In addition to the exceptional faculty members and high rankings for clinical care, the school is making great strides toward educating the medical leaders of the future.”

Dean Mosqueda spoke about the importance of mentorship and training on the Keck School campus. The School is currently undergoing a 3-year curriculum renewal process, which will further enable Keck School students to become clinician-citizen-scientist leaders prepared to practice medicine in this ever-evolving world. Dean Mosqueda noted the Keck School’s continuing commitment to more actively engaging and mentoring the students and trainees.

“You can feel the energy that our exceptional clinical and research faculty members bring to our campus, especially when interacting with our students and trainees,” she said with pride. Dean Mosqueda ended her remarks by thanking the generous donors whose support made these scholarships possible. “The good that comes from your support does not end when our students receive their degrees; it reverberates throughout the years as they serve our local community, and communities across the nation and the world, with skill and compassion.”

During the event, three exceptional 3rd year medical students who have benefited from scholarship support were profiled. One recipient, Anthony Sanchez, is the son of two deaf parents. Starting from childhood, Anthony served as an interpreter for his parents in order to ensure that they were receiving the necessary information to manage their medical care appropriately. He began to see himself as a bridge between the hearing and deaf communities, and it is this bridging role he is most excited about when thinking

“*At the Keck School of Medicine, we are focused on the future, and our future is bright.*”

LAURA MOSQUEDA, MD
KECK SCHOOL DEAN
of his future career as a physician. Anthony also noted that the scholarship that he received has enabled him not only to continue pursuing his studies but also provided him a much-needed emotional boost. “Growing up, money was always on the forefront of their minds. My parents were always struggling financially, so having the opportunity to receive a scholarship has really taken the weight off of my shoulders.”

The second scholarship recipient, Ravali Reddy, took two years off between college and medical school. During that time, she volunteered as a health educator at the San Francisco Women's Community Clinic, an organization dedicated to providing culturally competent care to women, regardless of their ability to pay. This experience made Ravali realize that she wanted to be a physician who provided care to female patients irrespective of their socio-economic status – as one woman to another. Ravali said that the scholarship has made all of the difference in alleviating the financial burden so she can focus on her studies and continue on her future career path.

On a medical mission trip with his father, Luke Naman, the third scholarship recipient, saw a great need for medicine in underdeveloped parts of the world. He chose the Keck School for the training he would receive at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center. He said, “It is training like nowhere else in the country.” Luke’s career goal is to provide medical care in places where there is a lack of access to medicine. He realizes how much debt the typical medical student incurs and without his scholarship, it would be difficult to practice medicine overseas. Luke noted, “The scholarship will allow me to pursue my dream to provide medical care to people who need it the most.”

In addition, the gala included a recognition of the past presidents of the Salerni Collegium Alumni Association, which was celebrating its 60th Anniversary. Awards were also presented to faculty and alumni. Mikel Snow, PhD, professor of clinical integrative anatomical sciences, received the Distinguished Faculty Award, which recognizes an outstanding faculty member for their contribution to the profession. Brent Allen, MD, class of 1965, received the Distinguished Alumni Service Award, which recognizes an individual whose professional or personal accomplishments bring recognition to themselves and to the university.

The Founders Award was presented to Willa O'Day Olsen, MD, which recognizes an individual who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the Keck School, university and to the community. Dr. Olsen is a widely respected pediatrician who attended USC as an undergraduate and stayed to earn her medical degree in 1962. After graduating, she continued to stay involved with the school, teaching future physicians at LAC+USC Medical Center and joining several alumni and leadership boards affiliated with the university.

The event also honored Althea Alexander, assistant dean of diversity and inclusion, who retired earlier this year after five decades of service to the Keck School.

“When Althea arrived at USC back in 1968, she was surprised to see that the medical school only had one African-American and one Latino student enrolled,” said Miguel Hernandez, MD, a Keck School alumnus who first met Alexander in 1981. “Althea made it her mission to encourage, enroll, retain and graduate minority students from highly underrepresented communities in health care. Through Althea’s tireless efforts and advocacy, the Keck School has graduated over 800 minority medical students.”

Vice Dean for Medical Education, Dr. Donna Elliott said, “Each one of the honorees is special to me and I was honored to be able to talk about their accomplishments and present the awards.”

The gala raised close to $500,000, which will provide funding for six full scholarships. Fritz Coleman, KNBC-TV Channel 4 weathercaster, served as the master of ceremonies for the event. The event was made possible by the generosity of the gala’s underwriters, Helen and Timothy Tai and Terri Wang and Richard Liu.
The Department of Medicine at the Keck School is committed to its mission to train the next generation of leaders through world-class patient care, career development and research. The department seeks to heal, educate and discover in order to improve the lives of people locally, nationally and globally.

The Department is committed to the advancement of its educational programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Ten collaborative divisions guide the work of more than 280 faculty and 275 trainees in the areas of cardiology, endocrinology, diabetes, gastroenterology, internal medicine, hematology, infectious diseases, nephrology, hypertension, oncology, pulmonology, critical care, sleep medicine and rheumatology.

The Department’s education programs are highly valued by medical students, with third- and fourth-year clerkships now ranked numbers 1 and 2, respectively. It offers 55 categorical and six combined internal-medicine pediatrics internship positions annually that have consistently experienced a 100 percent match rate, attracting many USC students into its training programs. The average pass rate on the last three American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) certifying examinations through 2018 was 96 percent.

In research, the Department ranks 38th nationally in funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), according to the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. Major research initiatives support work in basic science and clinical research, including: body computing, cell therapy, diabetes and obesity research, drug discovery, kidney research, liver diseases research, lupus, pulmonary research, rare blood disorders and tumor cell research, and many others.

The Department is dedicated to providing quality, state-of-the-art patient care to both insured and uninsured patient populations throughout Southern California. Health care delivery locations include Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center, the Keck Medical Center of USC and multiple satellite locations throughout the region. Ambulatory services provide care to more than 150,000 patients annually.

As an indication of the Department’s prioritization of quality and safety, an assignment of a new vice chair for quality and safety was created to support that critical mission. The Department is also committed to developing new niche clinical programs and recruiting top-tier research “rainmakers,” and is actively recruiting for more than 40 new faculty positions.

Department of Medicine by the numbers

10 DIVISIONS
MORE THAN 280 FACULTY
275 FELLOWS AND RESIDENTS