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# Norma Berryhill

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

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In the years since the School of Medicine began its four year curriculum and the North Carolina Memorial Hospital (now UNC Hospitals) opened its doors, this medical center has experienced remarkable growth in size, influence and service to the state and nation. Concurrent with that growth has been a most impressive record of scientific scholarship by our faculty members. Their achievements have been recognized and hailed by national and international scientific societies, by federal agencies and by peers throughout the world. Many of our faculty have close colleagues and collaborators in other parts of the world and often are invited to deliver distinguished lectures across the United States and abroad. As a result, some of our most accomplished scientists and scholars may be better known in Berkeley, Oxford and Kyoto than they are in Chapel Hill.

Realizing this, in 1985 Dean Bondurant and other senior members of the medical school family decided that some appro-

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priate method should be found to honor our own distinguished faculty here at home. The product of their deliberations is this annual distinguished lectureship, which honors the School of Medicine's most accomplished scientists and scholars. Each year the lectureship affords the entire faculty an opportunity to hear and pay tribute to one of their own.

The lectureship is named in honor of Norma Berryhill who, along with her husband Dr. Reece Berryhill, contributed immeasurably to the development of this great institution and its outstanding faculty.

While honoring an eminent member of the School of Medicine faculty, the Norma Berryhill Distinguished Lecture serves as an occasion to further the sense of community created and nurtured by Mrs. Berryhill.

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# Program

## **NEW FACULTY SLIDE PRESENTATION**

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

A. Wesley Burks, MD  
Dean, UNC School of Medicine

### **INTRODUCTION OF LECTURER**

A. Wesley Burks, MD  
Dean, UNC School of Medicine

### **LECTURE**

Epidemic and Pandemic Coronaviruses  
of the 21st Century  
Ralph S. Baric, PhD



## Norma Berryhill 1902-2005

Walter Reece Berryhill will be known always as the father of modern medical education at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the man whose vision, genius and determination built the four-year School of Medicine and imbued it with his passion for excellence.

But as those who knew Dr. Berryhill best are well aware, the monumental accomplishments for which he is remembered were not his alone. He had a partner. In everything he did, Dr. Berryhill relied on the love and loyalty, the quiet wisdom, the strength and support of Norma, his wife of forty-eight years.

Mrs. Berryhill, like her husband, had an exalted place in the history of this School of Medicine. For as Dr. Berryhill himself once confided to a friend: "She did more than anybody."

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Born Norma Connell, she was the oldest girl among 10 children in a Warren County farm family that raised cotton and tobacco. She first met her future husband in 1921 when she was a student at Peace College in Raleigh and he a student at UNC. Their friendship began to blossom when she transferred to the University two years later. He was a first-year medical student at that time.

After his second year, Reece Berryhill moved to Boston to continue his medical education. Mrs. Berryhill recalled that the sadness of that separation was tempered by the fact that “he wrote to me almost every day.”

Their affection deepened over the next few years as he prepared for his future in medicine and she embarked on a career in social work. After spending a year in Leakesville-Spray (now Eden), she moved to New York City, where she worked in a settlement house for immigrant women and pursued a graduate degree in guidance counseling at Columbia University. She returned to North Carolina to become Dean of Girls at Central High School in Charlotte.

On August 2, 1930, Norma and Reece Berryhill were married. “After saying he wouldn’t marry me until he could support me, we got married in the depths of the Depression,” she recalled with amusement. “We would have gotten along very poorly if I hadn’t had a job.”

She worked as a guidance counselor for delinquent girls in Cleveland while he was finishing his residency and serving as an instructor at Western Reserve College. In 1933, after Dr. Berryhill accepted the position as Director of Student Health Services at UNC, the couple moved back to North Carolina for good.

“We both loved the University and we knew so many people here that we really felt that we were coming home,” Mrs. Berryhill

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said.

In 1937, Dr. Berryhill was appointed Assistant Dean in the School of Medicine. Three years later he assumed the deanship, inaugurating an era of unprecedented growth and progress. His remarkable accomplishments during 24 years as Dean included, in the words of long-time friend, the late Dr. William Blythe, "the physical expansion of the medical school, including the building of the North Carolina Memorial Hospital, and the recruitment of faculty and staff necessary for operating the clinical departments and the hospital."

In these and all other undertakings, Mrs. Berryhill was always there, a fount of wisdom and quiet encouragement. As Dr. Blythe observed, "Together they made the four-year medical school at Chapel Hill."

From the earliest days of Dr. Berryhill's deanship, Mrs. Berryhill "set the tone for at least the social aspects of the medical school," said the late Dr. Kenneth Brinkhous, who recalled first visiting in the Berryhill home in 1946. "The school was very small back then, and there was a feeling of warmth and closeness. Mrs. Berryhill lent grace and dignity and was always sensitive to the needs of faculty and students. Her home was always open, and that atmosphere of graciousness was so important in helping to recruit the faculty needed to expand to a four-year school."

The late Dr. John Graham, the first Norma Berryhill Distinguished Lecturer, also recalled his first taste of Berryhill hospitality in 1946. "I was just a young instructor, but it wasn't long before my wife and I were invited to the Berryhills' for dinner. For them, that was just a natural part of making people feel welcome, of creating a sense of family."

Over the years, hundreds of faculty members and spouses came to dinner, often enjoying the fruits of Dr. Berryhill's beloved garden. There also were teas at the Berryhill home each year for all

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of the medical students, and great Christmas Eve parties attended by the entire faculty and their families.

One such party was particularly memorable. While most of the guests were enjoying themselves downstairs, the young son of a junior faculty member ventured upstairs and removed every doorknob from every door in every room. The parents were mortified, of course. The Berryhills were amused—that is, until they tried to reattach all the doorknobs.

The explanation that Mrs. Berryhill gave for their almost constant outflowing of hospitality revealed not only the instincts of Southern gentility but also more than a touch of pragmatism. “We felt it was very important to involve families—including the children—and to get them interested in the University, because that’s how you build loyalty.”

The late Dr. Christopher Fordham, former UNC Chancellor and Dean of the School of Medicine, recalled vividly his days as a medical student when Mrs. Berryhill served as “first lady.”

“Her quiet, friendly manner was inspirational to all who knew her,” Dr. Fordham explained. “She played her role as first lady with grace, effectiveness and skill.

“She and Dr. Berryhill were quite a team. I wouldn’t doubt they talked over everything. Her influence was substantial.”

Many of the students who entered medical school after World War II were in their late 20s, having postponed their education to serve in the military. Unlike their predecessors, many were married.

It was difficult for the students—most of whom were men—to readjust to academic life, and difficult for their wives, who were thrown into a new environment with few friends and little to do. Before long they learned that if they had a problem they could go to Norma Berryhill and that, more often than not, she could help.

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“They really just needed someone to talk to and open up to,” Mrs. Berryhill said with great affection. “Eventually, some of the other faculty wives and I helped organize groups of student wives so they could get to know each other and help each other.” Later she helped form similar groups for the wives of residents at the hospital.

She cherished the friendships she made and the memories of sharing the happiness and sorrows of those bright, brave young women. “They are the delight of my life,” she once said.

With the opening of North Carolina Memorial Hospital, Mrs. Berryhill devoted a large measure of her considerable intellect and energy to the building of a highly effective auxiliary organization.

“With characteristic modesty and selflessness, her involvement in the Auxiliary served, nonetheless, as a very visible and a very strong example for others to follow,” Dr. Graham contended. “Together the Berryhills were a formidable pair who earned the devotion of many. He took care of the faculty and she served as a friend, a good example and a pillar of strength for the wives.”

For decades, Mrs. Berryhill continued to serve as the Medical School’s most revered ambassador of goodwill. Dr. Brinkhous, a long-time friend and admirer, once described her as “perhaps the greatest supporter the school has ever had.”

The late Dr. Stuart Bondurant, Dean Emeritus, called Mrs. Berryhill “the source of great influence on the development of the School of Medicine and its people over many decades. Her clear insights and high standards combined with an unfailing interest in the lives and careers of faculty, students and their families made her a true co-founder of the School of Medicine.”

To all such accolades Mrs. Berryhill modestly replied: “I just happened to be married to the right man who was at the right place at the right time. I was very fortunate; he shared his life with me.”

Likewise, everyone in the School of Medicine family is fortunate that she shared her remarkable life with us.





## Ralph S. Baric, PhD

Dr. Baric is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the University of North Carolina. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Zoology from North Carolina State University and a PhD in Microbiology and Immunology from North Carolina State University.

He conducted postgraduate research at the University of Southern California School of Medicine in the department of Microbiology. His group has published over 375 papers, in journals like PNAS, Nature Medicine, Science, Nature, Cell, NEJM, PloS Medicine and PloS Pathogens. The Baric laboratory uses genetic, immunologic, molecular and biochemical approaches to study the molecular mechanisms regulating virus replication, pathogenesis, molecular evolution and cross species transmission using emerging coronaviruses, flaviviruses (Dengue) and noroviruses as model systems. We have pioneered new strategies

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for developing reverse genetic approaches for manipulating the SARS-CoV, SAR-CoV-2 and MERS-CoV genomes and are actively studying the role of multiple genes that function in cross species transmission, virulence, pathogenesis, viral transcription and RNA fidelity, using novel mouse models of human disease.

The Baric laboratory is also identifying key neutralizing epitopes in emerging coronaviruses, dengue and noroviruses using human monoclonal antibodies and structure guided immunogen design to develop broadly active vaccines and immunotherapeutics against these pathogens. Finally, his group has developed novel animal models of human disease and identified dozens of host susceptibility loci that regulate emerging CoV pathogenesis and vaccine performance.

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# Selection Committee

Wendy R. Brewster, MD, PhD - *Chair*

Samantha Meltzer-Brody, MD, MPH - *Immediate Past Chair*

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Sharon Campbell, MS, PhD

Henrik Dohlman, PhD

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Janet Hadar, MSN, MBA, FACHE

Erin Malloy, MD

Kenya McNeal-Trice, MD

Lisa Schiller

Nick Shaheen, MD, MPH

Alisa Wolberg, PhD

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# Former Lecturers

1985	John B. Graham, MD
1986	G. Philip Manire, PhD
1987	Floyd W. Denny, MD
1988	Mary Ellen Jones, PhD
1989	Colin G. Thomas, Jr., MD
1990	Carl W. Gottschalk, MD
1991	William B. Blythe, MD
1992	George Johnson, Jr., MD
1993	Stuart Bondurant, MD
1994	Judson J. Van Wyk, MD
1995	Christopher C. Fordham, III, MD
1996	Frank C. Wilson, MD
1997	Joseph S. Pagano, MD
1998	Joe W. Grisham, MD
1999	P. Frederick Sparling, MD
2000	George F. Sheldon, MD
2001	Edward A. Norfleet, MD
2002	Oliver Smithies, MA, DPhil
2003	Harold R. Roberts, MD
2004	Philip A. Bromberg, MD
2005	Joel E. Tepper, MD
2006	Robert C. Cefalo, MD, PhD
2007	Shelley Earp, MD
2008	Richard C. Boucher, Jr., MD
2009	Jeffrey L. Houpt, MD
2010	Jenny P-Y Ting, PhD
2011	Ronald Falk, MD
2012	Eugene P. Orringer, MD
2013	Judith E. Tintinalli, MD, MS, FACEP
2014	Myron S. Cohen, MD
2015	J. Charles Jennette, MD
2016	Aziz Sançar, MD, Ph
2017	Nancy Chescheir, MD
2018	Giselle Corbie-Smith, MD, MSc
2019	William L. Roper, MD, MPH