Six-month trial of Accutane leads to FDA approval for acne treatment.

Neil Swanson hired as first dermatologic surgeon in department.

Lynne Morrison hired for her expertise in immunodermatology, becomes second female on faculty.

OHSU becomes a public corporation and separates from the Oregon State System of Higher Education.

Contemporary Leaders Navigate into 21st Century
Frank Parker and Neil Swanson, 1978 to 2010

The Parker Period: 1978 to 1994

Frank Parker, M.D., assumed the chairmanship two years before Mt. St. Helens exploded in 1980. Like the seismic activity beneath the Cascade Mountains, the earth was shifting beneath the healthcare system. Costs for federally mandated health insurance as well as private insurance were pushing skyward. Policy-makers and employers sought to contain costs through HMOs, managed care and certificate-of-need laws for hospitals. Malpractice rates were climbing.

In 1979, the inflation rate hit double digits, and the U.S. economy was soon in recession. Hospitals and their medical staffs had to compete for patients, creating poor town-gown relations. Medicine began losing patients to alternative practitioners, and the Oregon Legislature questioned whether the state could afford its only medical school.

To add to Parker’s difficult transition, he succeeded Lobitz, the man who had recruited,

Cosmetic services offered by dermatologists grow as FDA approves Botox® for the use in the temporary improvement of moderate to severe glabellar lines in adult men and women 65 or younger (although it had been used off-label for that purpose for many years before).

1999

Oregon Health & Science University
Department of Dermatology

Molly Kulesz-Martin is hired as research director and moves her lab from Buffalo, N.Y. to Oregon.

2002

Molly Kulesz-Martin is hired as research director and moves her lab from Buffalo, N.Y. to Oregon.
mentored and befriended most of the existing faculty.

“It took a little getting used to,” recalls Parker. “He was a giant, so it was tough at first.”

With the slumping economy and worries about the medical school’s survival, two visionaries coincided with Parker’s arrival and changed the Oregon landscape forever. Leonard Laster, M.D., became the university’s second president in 1978 and – with the help of Sen. Mark O. Hatfield – ignited a building boom on Marquam Hill that lasted two decades. The medical school tapped Ransom Arthur, M.D., for the deanship in 1979. Both were Harvard Medical School graduates and strong research advocates. Their focus on building a first-class research university uplifted everyone, including the Department of Dermatology. (Laster left Oregon in 1987, Arthur in 1982.)

John Kendall, M.D., dean of the medical school when it hired Parker, says, “Frank did a great job in a tough time, and he improved the clinical presence of the department.”

During the 15 years of Parker’s chairmanship (1978 to 1994), the university morphed into a world-class teaching hospital and research center with facilities across the state. In 1988, the university hired its third president, Peter O. Kohler, M.D., who continued to fan the flames of growth. (Initially called the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center in 1974, President Laster successfully lobbied to change the name to the Oregon Health Sciences University in 1981 to more accurately reflect its missions. Its name changed once again in 2001 to Oregon Health & Science University when it merged with the Oregon Graduate Institute of Science and Technology.)

Parker joined the department from the University of Washington and combined an impressive research pedigree with the ability to strengthen clinical programs. Three high-profile clinician/researchers – Hanifin, Storrs and Wuepper – created a stable bridge between the department’s past and its future.

“Frank focused on clinical practice,” Hanifin recalls. “He developed a good reputation, saw patients in the area, consulted readily and interacted well with the practicing community.”

Joseph Bloom, M.D., dean of the medical school from 1993 to 2001, says that Parker “built the clinical part of the department to a degree that it had never been before. He was and remains the clinician’s dermatologist. He added great strength in the critical subspecialties of dermatopathology and dermatologic surgery.”

Born and raised in Seattle, Parker completed undergraduate (1954) and medical school (1958) degrees at the University of Washington. He did an internal medicine residency at Columbia University, Presbyterian Hospital in New York, and returned to Seattle in 1960 for specialty training in medicine, endocrinology and dermatology.

Early in his career, he studied and published many scientific articles on the biochemical, histologic and histochemical, and electron microscopic aspects of atherosclerosis and xanthomas (fatty deposits under the skin). Later on, Parker studied and wrote scientific articles on skin tumors, particularly in elderly populations.
Trained as an internist and dermatologist, Parker appreciated the perspective both specialties afforded him. “Sometimes things pop up on the skin and you say, ‘This can be a clue to an internal problem.’” He wrote book chapters on the cutaneous aspects of internal disease and how the skin can mirror metabolic disorders, such as diabetes.

His leadership skills were evident as a young man. At the University of Washington, he was student body president. In later years, he served as president of the Oregon Dermatology Society (1982) and chairman of the OHSU medical board and medical staff (1982), and he was on the editorial board of the Western Journal of Medicine from 1984 to 2002.

The success of a program lies with its people, and in that regard, Parker recruited some of the best in the field, including White, a dermatopathologist, Morrison, an immunodermatologist and Swanson, a dermatologic surgeon. Dermatology was continuing its evolution toward greater subspecialty expertise, and Parker kept the department moving with this tide.

Dermatopathology marries two disciplines: dermatology and pathology. Thus, these specialists are prized by both dermatology and pathology departments because of their ability...
to correlate pathology findings with the clinical picture and to raise revenues for a department. When dermatopathology became critical to dermatology residency training, White was recruited as the department’s first certified dermatopathologist, joining the faculty in 1979. This followed dermatology education in Oregon in 1977 and dermatopathology training at New York University. His son, Kevin White, M.D., a 2006 alumnus, joined the faculty following his residency and is now adding depth to dermatopathology after spending a year at the University of Virginia to complete a fellowship.

Immunodermatology took off as a subspecialty during the Lobitz years, but Morrison brought contemporary training to the department. The field focuses on immune-mediated skin diseases such as lupus (an immune system dysfunction in which the body attacks its own organs and tissues), blistering diseases such as pemphigoid and pemphigus, and atopic dermatitis (an allergic skin reaction to irritants). Morrison attended OHSU for both medical school and dermatology training, graduating in 1986. She then went to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to an immunodermatology fellowship and returned to OHSU in 1989 as the first board-certified immunodermatologist.

Dermatologic surgery has undergone explosive growth in the past 25 years. According to the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, surgeons performed nearly 3 million procedures for skin cancer and repair, and 1.4 million laser and light treatments in 2007, as well as many cosmetic procedures, such as Botox® injections and skin lifting. In 1989, Parker recruited Neil Swanson, a dermatologic surgeon. The Michigan-trained Swanson expanded the department’s array of services and enhanced its cancer treatment options through expertise and training in Mohs surgery, a surgical technique to remove cancerous tissue with minimal disfiguration to surrounding tissues.

Robert Bell, M.D., a 1965 resident graduate, says that Parker kept “the shop going during difficult times and a period of adjustment in medicine. He was an excellent administrator, grew the residency program and helped the department financially.”

Parker summarizes his impact as “keeping the department going between two outstanding chairmen, while improving the mission to care for patients and perform useful research.”

His successor, Swanson, says Parker is too modest. “He invigorated the clinical part of the department. He stabilized and expanded the residency program and hired good people. It’s part of what has allowed me to be successful in growing things.”

Looking back over his career, Parker, who turned 78 in 2010, says he loves the specialty. “Dermatology offers a more relaxed lifestyle than other specialties, and yet you get to see kids with acne, older people with melanomas that could kill them, men and women, and all socioeconomic groups. I have patients whom I’ve followed since they were youngsters and who are now in their 70s and 80s. In the next 50 years, we won’t recognize dermatology because researchers will find the causes of major skin diseases.”
1986 to 1995, John Ansel, M.D.
Joined the department following residency at the University of Pennsylvania and five years at the National Institutes of Health where he focused on immunology and cellular oncology. In Oregon he developed a research program around the role of cytokines in skin inflammation, corneal disease, wound healing and melanoma tumorigenesis. Ansel left in 1995. At the time of his unfortunate passing from cancer in 2009, Ansel was professor and chairman of the Department of Dermatology and professor in the Department of Ophthalmology in the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock.

Alumni Patricia Norris, Diane Baker and Paul Russell, along with James Baker embark to raise funds to endow the department’s first professorship in Frances Storrs’ name. With a successful initial fundraising effort achieved, the first Frances J. Storrs, M.D., Lectureship, a town-hall formatted event, is held in 2009.
Swanson Era: 1994 to 2010

“Ironically, when I came to Oregon, I wasn’t seeking a chairmanship,” Neil Swanson, M.D., recalls. “When Frank stepped down in 1994, the dean [Joseph Bloom] asked if anybody was interested in serving as interim chairman. Later, Joe asked me to serve for three years.” He reluctantly agreed, and after a nationwide search for a permanent chair, the school offered Swanson the job.

The mid-1990s weren’t a walk in the Rose Garden. Oregon’s property tax limitations and competition in healthcare challenged the university and required the medical school to hone its management skills. “Deans and chairs hired MBAs, demanded more realistic budgets and research productivity, and rewarded investigators able to land NIH grants to support research,” states the “Reflections on Yesterday: OHSU School of Medicine History” booklet. (www.ohsu.edu/xd/education/schools/school-of-medicine/about/upload/Reflections-on-Yesterday-OHSU-School-of-Medicine-History.pdf)

Swanson, likewise, saw the benefits of streamlining. He took over a department that operated under the old billing system of resident clinics and individual private faculty practices. With the dean’s blessing, he merged the two into a single faculty group practice on Marquam Hill. “We shared clinical resources and scheduled patients in a common place,” Swanson says.

The new system allowed everyone – the old guard as well as the new – to grow. And the ability to grow became a critical issue as the environment surrounding specialty care began to heat up. Demand for dermatology care increased, and Swanson’s recruits and practice system provided the capacity to handle the higher patient volumes, thereby increasing revenues. Patient revenues rose from $1.8 million in 1995 to nearly $13 million in 2009. “We’ve been riding the coattails of an institution that has seen dramatic growth and change in the past 15 years,” Swanson says.

According to Hanifin, the department was “top heavy with three older professionals,” when Swanson became chairman. “Neil was brilliant: he found a way to give us a severance package in the late ’90s that allowed us to take early retirement,” says Hanifin, referring to himself, Parker.
and Storrs. “This freed up salaries to hire a whole gaggle of young people. He hired us back part time. Neil was very clever at finding ways to use resources to the positive good.”

Newer hires included young dermatologists from the residency pool and outside of Oregon. Hanifin’s protégé, Eric Simpson, M.D., was recruited to stay on to expand the department’s clinical research efforts when he graduated in 2002. Eczemas and other atopic dermatitis continue to be his research focus. The year before,

Devere, M.D., was hired from Washington University in St. Louis. She directed medical dermatology and was also the resident program director in her last years before leaving in 2010. Other medical dermatologists hired include Benjamin Ehst, M.D., Ph.D., following his residency at Johns Hopkins University, and Tatyana Shaw, M.D., a 2009 resident graduate.

As the department grew and needed more surgeons Swanson hired three alumni: Bruce Russell, M.D., Ken Lee, M.D. and Anna Bar, M.D. Russell and Lee have since moved on, but in Lee’s 12 years in the department he helped expand not only Mohs surgery referrals, but also cosmetic and laser offerings. Additionally, he collaborated with faculty member Steven Jacques, Ph.D., on an NIH grant to study optical imaging of skin cancer. Bar, who completed a surgical fellowship outside of OHSU, specializes in skin cancer surgery, lasers and cosmetic procedures. She joined the group in 2007 and is married to fellow faculty member and dermatopathologist Kevin White.

Another dermatopathologist, Alvin Solomon, M.D., joined the faculty and the VA in 2008. With his solid experience in academic medicine gained at Emory and other universities, he was a perfect candidate to take over the residency program directorship in 2010.

Rounding out the department’s newer subspecialty expertise are pediatric dermatologists. Canadian-educated Alfons Krol, M.D., F.R.C.P.C., came in 2002 and directs the pediatric dermatology programs at OHSU and Doernbecher Children’s Hospital. Dawn Siegel, M.D., joined the department in 2007, but left in 2010. As the state’s only board-certified pediatric dermatologists they provide an important referral source for the state. Swanson says most programs don’t have one pe-
diatric dermatologist, let alone two. Additionally, the pair worked to establish a pediatric dermatology fellowship that began in 2010.

One of Dean Bloom’s assignments for Swanson was to enhance research. “Most dermatology departments in the 1990s were based on immunology,” Swanson recalls. “I’d been a cancer person all my life, and OHSU had a young cancer institute [now called the Knight Cancer Institute]. The dean and I decided to build on skin cancer.”

In 1999, Swanson wooed Kulesz-Martin to direct research. She brought experience in epidermal models of cancer and proliferative disorders. Like other senior researchers, she moved her entire lab (a staff of five) from Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo N.Y. to Oregon.

A draw for Kulesz-Martin’s group was the availability of the tissue bank stocked and run by the surgery unit, and ear, nose and throat surgeons. “This kind of reliable access to abnormal tissue samples is essential to cancer diagnosis and treatment,” according to Kulesz-Martin.

When Andrew Blauvelt, M.D., a physician scientist and immunologist at the NIH, wanted to move to Oregon, Swanson looked for a way to provide him with salary support and lab start-up funds. The Veterans Affairs Medical Center Chief of Dermatology, Clif White Jr., offered the solution. With 20 years of government service at his back and a steadily growing dermatopathology practice, White gave up his VA administrative position to solely focus on dermatopathology. Blauvelt stepped into the VA post in 2004.

Blauvelt worked in the dermatology branch of the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md., adding to the department’s growing cancer research strength. He pioneered research on HIV and Langerhans cells, human herpesvirus 8 that causes Kaposi’s sarcoma. He has been honored through induction to the American Society for Clinical Investigators. In addition, he joins Hani-fin, Parker, Storrs, Swanson and White as fellow inductees in the prestigious American Dermatological Association.

Once in Oregon, Blauvelt’s interest in psoriasis grew and he transitioned his research focus to the
pathogenesis of psoriasis. Kulesz-Martin’s lab also added a focus on understanding the immunologic underpinnings of psoriasis.

Two other senior research faculty in the department are Jacques, a biomedical, biochemical and electrical engineer who focuses on skin optics and lasers and holds a joint appointment at the OHSU School of Science and Engineering; and Melissa Wong, Ph.D., a cell biologist working with stem and epithelial cells in developing and adult intestines with the goal of learning more about cancer growth, including colorectal cancer.

Beyond the bench, the department lists eight clinical investigators who continue traditional investigator-initiated and pharmaceutical-directed clinical research. The areas of study include atopic dermatitis/eczema, laser and cosmetic issues, psoriasis, pediatric conditions and skin cancer, but also have included acne, aging skin, infectious diseases, seborrheic dermatitis (flaky skin) and urticaria (hives).

Right: Dermatopathology continues to be a favorite rotation for residents with high praise for Clifton White Jr.’s (top left) patience and aptitude for teaching. Kevin White (bottom left) continues the tradition during an afternoon sign-out with an unidentified medical student, resident Amy Swerdlin, and dermatopathology fellow and former resident Rodd Takiguchi.

Below: Kim Sanders was hired in 2008 as the department’s first physician assistant.
Swanson reports that in the past 15 years, the department moved from almost no NIH funding into the top 15 for dermatology. “Clinical and translational research is thriving and sustainable.”

If clinical care and research are the department’s backbone, its students, residents and fellows comprise its heart and soul. The residency program is one of the most sought after in the nation. In 2009, 450 physicians applied for four first-year residency positions. In 1997, the program had nine residents (three in each of the three years required to complete residency education); in 2010 there are 13 residents. Overall, the department has produced nearly 200 dermatologists for the state and nation.

Since coming to Oregon in 1989, Swanson has continuously trained fellows. He has now educated 30 surgical fellows (10 in Michigan), with about three quarters starting their careers in academic medicine environments.

In addition to the surgical fellowship, the department inaugurated a dermatopathology fellowship in conjunction with the Department of Pathology in 2008 and the pediatric dermatology fellowship, which began in 2010.

Swanson announced he would step down as chairman in 2010. During his tenure, he was president of the OHSU Medical Group – the entity for all physicians practicing at OHSU – and associate dean for clinical affairs. He remains associate director for clinical operations of the Knight Cancer Institute. In his role as president of the OHSU Medical Group, Swanson was intimately involved with the building and funding of the Center for Health & Healing, OHSU’s first building on Portland’s South Waterfront. In 2004 he received the Samuel J. Stegman, M.D., Award for Distinguished Service from the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery, and in 2009 he received the Frederic E. Mohs, M.D., Award for Career Achievement by the American College of Mohs Surgery. He has held many top posts in state and national dermatology societies.

Under Swanson’s leadership, the department grew from six faculty members to 26. It revitalized its teaching programs, boosted research, expanded clinical operations and established an administrative framework to support the department for the coming decades.

Portland dermatologist Baker says the department, along with the specialty, has grown by leaps and bounds in recent decades. “I really think Neil took the department to the next level. It is an excellent department, one of the best in the country.”

“Oregon has a long and excellent reputation for excellence in dermatology research and training,” says Stephen Katz, M.D., Ph.D., director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, who came close to selecting Oregon for his own dermatology residency. “Traditionally, it’s been a well-sought-after program from prospective residents around the country.”

Charitable contributions are helping the department meet current and future financial challenges. Beyond donations to endowments and other contributions, three retiring volunteer faculty members who were former residents have donated their practices to the department. Robert Amon, M.D., donated his Seaside and The Dalles practices when he retired in 2000. The department has maintained the practices, filling a need in these underserved areas. In 2006, Robert Bell, M.D., transferred the patients from his practice, and most recently in 2009, Larry Peterson, M.D., 1985 alumnum, also left his practice in Lake Oswego to the department. “It’s a gift that keeps on giving,” Swanson said.

From the Kingery era to Swanson, the department mirrors the evolution of medicine

Joe Bloom, former medical school dean, summarizes it this way: “From Kingery to the present time, the department has paralleled the evolution of an academic medical center. What started as a practitioner’s medical school has evolved into a full-service teaching, research and clinical care center.”

Lyle Kingery planted a seed that others nurtured throughout the decades – “controlled growth,” as Swanson likes to say. Almost 80 years later, a mature forest stands above the Oregon landscape, with branches that extend nationally across the medical landscape. Today’s faculty and its successors are charged with safeguarding this treasure and its harvest for years to come.
1996 to present, Steven Jacques, Ph.D.
Professor of dermatology and biomedical engineering, Jacques joined the department in 1996. His lab develops novel uses of lasers and light in medicine and biology, with applications that are both therapeutic and diagnostic. His dermatology-related projects include a polarized light camera designed to identify margins to guide surgery, a spectral camera that provides information to predict treatment failure sites following laser treatment of portwine stain lesions and a bedside microscope that can assist Mohs surgeons in indentifying skin cancer margins.

1999 to present, Molly Kulesz-Martin, Ph.D.
Professor of dermatology and cell and developmental biology, Kulesz-Martin was recruited to OHSU in 1999 as director of research and associate chair of the department. Under her leadership, the department’s research division expanded to five NIH-funded research laboratories (Kulesz-Martin, Blauvelt, Jacques, Wong and Xiao-Jing Wang) at one point, placing it in the top 15 percent of dermatology departments in NIH funding.

Kulesz-Martin also co-leads the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Solid Tumors Program and initiated the Dermatology Molecular Profiling Resource. This resource collects tissue samples of skin, head and neck cancers to track patient progress and outcomes.

Kulesz-Martin’s research focuses on understanding epithelial cell homeostasis and carcinogenesis and translating knowledge from mouse in vitro and in vivo models to human cancer. She and her team have identified specific stepwise changes that occur in progression to cancer and metastasis. Her lab is also investigating the development of psoriasis and how skin cell survival and skin inflammation processes contribute to this hyperproliferative disorder.

2001 to current, Melissa Wong, Ph.D.
Associate professor of dermatology and cell and developmental biology, Wong joined the department’s research division in 2001. Wong’s research centers on the body’s inside “skin” – epithelia of the intestine to understand the molecular mechanisms underlying stem cell regulation in the context of intestinal development, tissue regeneration and disease. Wong’s laboratory is investigating the molecular mechanisms underlying inflammatory bowel disease, the cancer stem-cell theory and is looking into how epithelia regenerate with chronic injury. She teaches and trains researchers at many levels, and plays an important role in the School of Medicine’s Molecular & Cell Biology Ph.D. Program.

2002 to current, Yuangang Liu, Ph.D.
2003 to 2008, Xiao-Xing Wang, Ph.D.
2004 to current, Andrew Blauvelt, M.D.
Professor of dermatology and molecular microbiology and immunology, Blauvelt came to OHSU in 2004 from the National Institutes of Health. His research focuses on the immunologic basis of psoriasis, although he closed his laboratory in 2010. He is also the founder and research director of OHSU’s Center of Excellence for Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis, a regional referral center specializing in multidisciplinary care of patients with complex psoriasis.

Predoctoral and postdoctoral training program expands dermatology research

The department offers predoctoral and postdoctoral training opportunities for careers in academic medicine and clinical science. One of these is the Training Program in the Molecular Basis of Skin/Mucosa Pathobiology, funded by the National Institute of Health National Cancer Institute and directed by Kulesz-Martin. Its focus is to educate translational and clinician scientists in research areas with a strong potential to impact dermatology. The department received initial funding in 2004 for five years to support 15 M.D., Ph.D. and predoctoral trainees in nine different
labs. The latest renewal supports the program through 2014 and increases the total funding to $2.5 million.

The program offers fellowships to two predoctoral students and three postdoctoral trainees to work on projects relating to the skin (cancer and inflammation). Several of the trainees have gone on to faculty positions at other universities and all have continued to work in the health sciences.

Dermatology is by nature interdisciplinary, involving multiple cell types (epithelial, stromal, endothelial and immune cells) and multiple treatment approaches (medical, genetic, immunological and surgical). Although based in the Department of Dermatology, the program gathers mentors from the Departments of Cell & Developmental Biology, Molecular & Medical Genetics, Molecular Microbiology & Immunology, Hematology & Medical Oncology, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Public Health & Preventive Medicine and the new OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Cancer Biology Program.

Program mentors offer core research resources and cross-disciplinary tools, including specialized cell culture of keratinocytes and dendritic cells; isolation, separation and molecular profiling of human mucosa/skin tissue; transgenic, knock-in and knock-out mice; and non-invasive real-time imaging of developing cancers and stromal changes.
Dermatology Links Generations

There must be something in the practice of dermatology that enhances the interest of sons and daughters to follow in their fathers’ footsteps. Although it is not rare for children to choose similar paths of work, it seems to be strong in the realm of Oregon-connected dermatologists.

Above: (left) Bruce Russell and Paul Russell, both completed their dermatology training in the department, 28 years apart. (Right) A family of physicians: Brad Burket (family physician and dentist), John Burket and Denise Burket Burke.

Opposite Page: Kevin White and Clifton White Jr. share a lot of mannerisms, a love of dermatopathology, and, as it turns out, a similar taste for ties.

Lyle Kingery, founding chairman, and Ted, clinical faculty
Aaron Lerner, faculty (and Marguerite, 1953 alumna and faculty), and Ethan, Harvard faculty
Leon Ray, clinical faculty beginning in the 1940s, and Thomas, 1977 alumnus
John Shaw, clinical faculty beginning in 1960, and Jim, 1985 alumnus
Charles Hammer II, group practice, Seattle, and Charles III, 1993 alumnus

John Burket, clinical faculty beginning in 1977, and Denise Burke, 1995 alumna and clinical faculty
Paul Russell, 1969 alumnus and clinical faculty, and Bruce, 1996 alumnus and former faculty
Michael “Mickey” Simpson, private practice, Texas, and Eric, 2002 alumnus and faculty
Clifton White Jr., 1977 alumnus and faculty, and Kevin, 2006 alumnus and faculty
Patrick Lillis, private practice, Colorado, and Joseph, 2009 alumnus