

Sun Health expands dementia support program

Sun Health, 14719 W. Grand Ave., Surprise, added a social services expert to its staff to meet a growing demand for its Memory Care Navigator program, which helps patients, family members and caregivers navigate the emotional, psychological and physical effects of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

The MCN program is provided at no cost to recipients thanks to funding from Sun Health Foundation donors. Recent donations enabled Sun Health to hire Cheryl Ortega as its second Mem-

ory Care Navigator. Ms. Ortega amassed almost three decades of human-service experience in Arizona, including working as a social services director at Plaza Del Rio Care Center, 13215 N. 94th Drive, Peoria; a social worker at Banner Boswell Rehab Center, 10601 W. Santa Fe Drive, Sun City; and a human services specialist for Arizona Adult Protective Services.

She joins Marty Finley, M. Ed, who started as the program's first navigator in 2013. The MCN program served 241 clients in fiscal year 2017 and it's on pace to surpass that number this year. The program has helped more than 1,400 individuals since its inception.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, more than 5.5 million Americans are living with dementia, a figure projected to grow to 8.5 million by 2030. Arizona

MORE INFO

What: Sun Health
Where: 14719 W. Grand Ave., Surprise
Call: Memory Care Navigator program, 623-832-9300

is expected to see a sharp uptick in Alzheimer's cases over the next decade, due to its aging population.

Ms. Ortega brings personal experience to the job. She helped care for her father who had Alzheimer's disease.

"Cheryl's an experienced and compassionate professional who is a perfect fit for the Memory Care program," Debra Richards, Sun Health Care Transitions and Supportive Services, who also oversees the MCN Program, stated in a news release.

Call 623-832-9300 or visit www.sunhealth.org/memorycare.



Cheryl Ortega is the new Memory Care Navigator at Sun Health in Surprise. [Submitted photo]

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MENTAL HEALTH

Memory navigator

Sun Health program pilots patients, caregivers through dementia

By Matt Roy
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

One local program offers help for West Valley residents with dementia.

Jennifer Drago, Sun Health vice president for population health, led her agency to launch the Memory Care Navigator program in 2013 for locals with memory loss and the loved ones who care for them.

"We are aware that many people in the West Valley were experiencing memory loss that comes with dementia but some may not have received a formal diagnosis and treatment, and still others are struggling with managing daily tasks or care giving for someone

» See Memory on page 7



From left, Sun Health Memory Care Navigator Marty Finley consults with Surprise resident Shirley Frizell. Formerly of Sun City West, Ms. Frizell cared for her late husband, who had Alzheimer's, for more than a decade and got help from a free program funded by the Sun Health Foundation. [Submitted photo/Allen Butler]

Memory

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with increasing memory loss symptoms. Whatever the issue, Sun Health wants to provide support to the client, family or caregiver to answer questions and connect them to available resources," Ms. Drago stated by email.

The free, confidential program is available to those who qualify within the Sun Health catchment area, which includes the Sun Cities, Surprise, Youngtown and parts of Glendale and Peoria. Based on the results of research studies, it is likely that thousands of West Valley residents could use the help.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov, reported that as of 2013, as many as 5 million Americans were living with Alzheimer's disease. The number of those afflicted had jumped more than 50 percent since 2000 and the number is expected to nearly triple to 14 million by 2050, according to a 2014 study.

Though the prevalence

overall has fallen in this century, dementia still affects 8.8 percent of those 65 or older, according to a national health and retirement study published in *JAMA Internal Medicine* in November 2016. At that rate, Sun City West alone is likely now home to more than 2,000 patients affected by dementia and memory loss.

Getting help starts with a phone call, said Marty Finley, a Sun Health navigator who has worked with more than 1,200 clients in the program since its inception nearly four years ago.

"Those in need can self-refer by calling 623-832-9300 or they may be referred by a physician, neighbor or social worker," Ms. Finley said. "They will speak with one of our two navigators, who will take information and make an appointment to come to their home to see the whole picture the family is dealing with. We can suggest environmental changes, since we do a complete assessment of what their needs and challenges are, and then set up an individualized plan to address those

needs."

Once engaged, the memory care navigator can provide a comprehensive needs assessment and devise a personalized health care plan; collaborate with and communicate recommendations to patients' physicians; make referrals to address other chronic and complicating medical conditions; educate patients and families about local clinical trials; and provide resources and link patients and their family members and caregivers to services, education and support groups in the area.

Other services are provided at the Sun Health Center for Health and Well-being, 14719 N.W. Grand Ave., Surprise, www.sunhealthwellbeing.org.

Sun Health does not accept insurance for the free program, which is entirely funded by the Sun Health Foundation. Though, participants with means may choose to donate, Ms. Finley said.

"It's just a great service and there is no charge to the patient or family member," Ms. Finley said. "They are encouraged to donate if they can, but they don't

have to be concerned about insurance because we don't bill insurance. It's a gift the Sun Health Foundation provides to the community."

She said the free services often continue beyond the initial assessment to help patients and families adapt as the disease progresses.

"It can be an ongoing resource as the disease progresses and challenges and needs change over time," Ms. Finley said. "People call back who we saw two or three years ago and they're always welcome."

For caregivers, who are often family members with no background or training in health care, it is important to take advantage of services readily available in the community to help them stay healthy, happy and informed while they care for patients in the home, she added.

"It's critical, because caregivers are the ones who face the challenges of long-term care every day. It is really important they get help from someone else, be proactive and forward looking. If their health deteriorates, then the person with dementia is left alone.

We've got to keep the caregiver healthy," Ms. Finley said.

Sun Health hosts a caregiver support group, which meets 3 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays every month all year in the community education room in the rehab building at the Grandview Terrace Retirement Center, 14515 W. Granite Valley Drive. The program also offers referrals for additional education, resources and respite services for caregivers.

Ms. Drago said Sun Health hopes to expand

the number of clients they serve, having recently added their second navigator to the program.

"We are excited that philanthropic support has allowed us to double the number of people that we are able to help going forward through the addition of a second memory care navigator," she said.

Visit www.sunhealthwellbeing.org/memory-care/.

Matt Roy can be reached at 623-876-2528 or mroy@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

IMPROVEMENTS

Sun Health officials challenge community

Progressive care unit added at Del E. Webb

Sun Health Foundation, the exclusive fundraising arm to Banner Del E. Webb and Banner Boswell medical centers, is providing financial support to build a 28-bed progressive care unit with all private rooms on the fifth floor of Banner Del E. Webb's D Tower.

"The new unit will serve patients with a variety of conditions, including congestive heart failure, renal disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and other illnesses and diagnoses," Nancy Adamson, Banner Del E. Webb chief nursing officer, said.

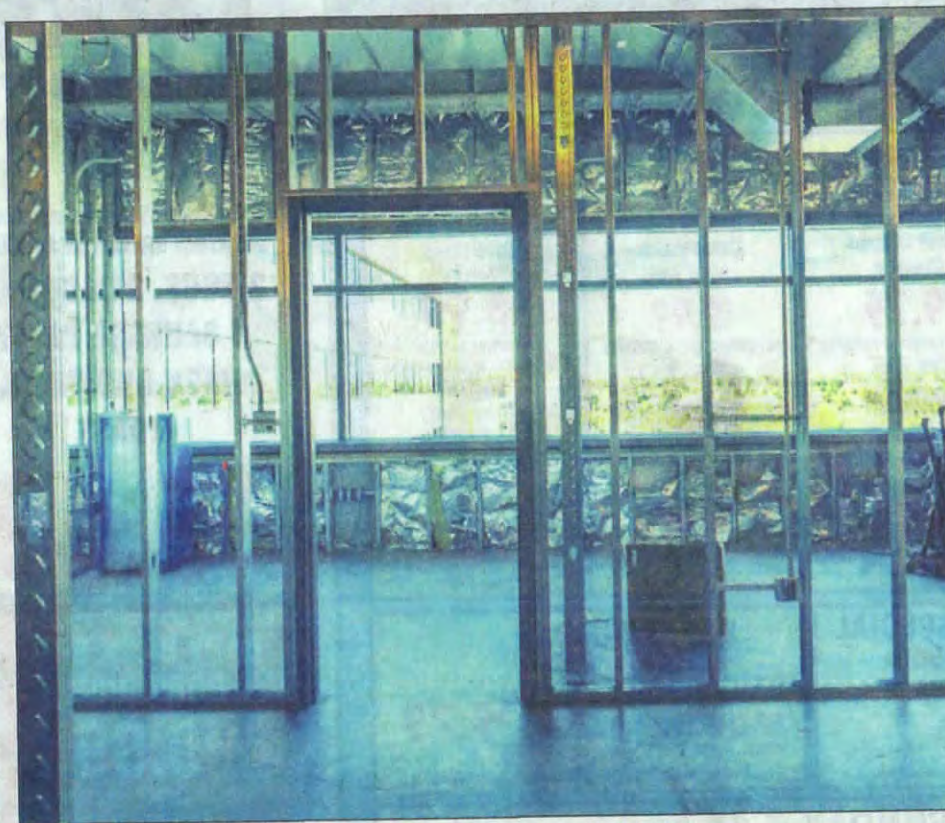
Banner Health and Sun Health Foundation officials have committed \$5.9 million to the \$10.9 million expansion, with the foundation challenging community members to help the cause. They hope to raise \$5 million for the project.

IF YOU GO:

What: Sun Health Foundation community challenge town halls
When: 9-11 a.m. Tuesday, April 18
Where: Santa Barbara Room in the Corte Bella Community, 22143 N. Mission Drive, Sun City West
When: 9-10:30 a.m. Monday, May 1
Where: Auditoriums A and B at Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center, 14502 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West

Leaders from Banner Del E. Webb and Sun Health Foundation are hosting two town halls to share information on the new unit and other hospital improvements. Sun Health Foundation leaders will talk about the role community support has played throughout the medical center's history and how it will shape its future success.

The two town halls are 9-11 a.m. Tuesday, April 18 in the Santa Barbara Room in the Corte Bella Community, 22143 N. Mission Drive, Sun City West; and 9-10:30 a.m. Monday, May 1 in auditoriums A and B at Banner Del E. Webb Medical Cen-



A patient room under construction at Del E. Webb Medical Center. [Submitted photo]

ter, 14502 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West. RSVP are requested to Joyce Wilt at 623-832-4319 or joyce.wilt@sun-

health.org.

It is anticipated the new unit will open to patients later this year. Once completed,

the non-profit hospital will see its bed count grow to 394 licensed beds.

"Community members

have a long history of supporting Banner Del E. Webb and their generosity played a major role in hospital's success," said I Guziak Sun Health president and CEO. "Build this unit will bolster the hospital's excellent reputation for patient care and add its standing as a community treasure."

The new unit will house a large central telemetry monitoring room, from which technicians will continually monitor the vital signs and heart rhythms of patients via a bank of monitors and specialized equipment. Other features will include a family waiting area, a conference room and a private corner room for clinicians to work with families.

"While the new floor certainly provide us with beds in the busy winter season, the primary reason for doing this is to offer more private rooms for patients," Ms. Adamson. "That's very important to us, as well as our patients."

The treasure within



Cleo Roberts, top right, applauds Tuesday during the dedication of the new Sun Health Institute building bearing her name. She and her husband, Bob, gave the institute its start. Bottom right, pathology technician Jyothi Bachalakuri explains the use of a machine used in brain research to from left, Sue Schreiber of Surprise, Nettie Evans of Sun City and Joy McCracken of Sun City West. At left, plaques bearing names of financial donors line the walkway leading to the new building.



Sun Health dedicates new research institute building

STORY BY JOY SLAGOWSKI
PHOTOS BY PETE PALLAGI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

When Dr. Marwan Sabbagh, director of clinical research at the Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research, gave the first tour of the Sun Health Research Institute's new \$5 million building to his parents Tuesday, it wasn't just a proud family moment.

It demonstrated to the Sabbaghs how their son is helping their generation, as well as gen-

erations to come, live well through their retirement years.

The SHRI is engaged in Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, prostate cancer and arthritis research. And the new expansion doubles the center's size.

Sabbagh's father, Adib, a heart surgeon in Tucson, and mother, Entisar, an anthropologist, toured the SHRI new 36,000-square-foot research building with their son, who explained the functions of the facility's first floor labora-

tories and offices.

Amy Rangel, a lab assistant, told the group on the tour how she divides a single blood draw to be analyzed for several different studies.

"We fractionalize every vial," Rangel said. "We have seven studies for biomarkers, which track and predict disease."

The SHRI is a "triple threat," Sabbagh said, engaged in pharmaceutical, state and federal studies.

SEE SUN HEALTH, A5

SUN HEALTH: New building doubles research capacity

FROM A1

"We just started a federal study for the study of fish oil for the treatment of Alzheimer's. And we have vaccination studies and cutting edge blockbuster drugs (studies)."

Sabbagh's father, Adib, said he was happy to see the new building completed.

"The demand was up to expand research," Adib said. "It's especially good to see that collaboration, and not only have one person's (contribution)." Adib said that the family immigrated from Iraq 45 years ago, and his son was born in New York.

Knowing that Sabbagh works in clinical research

is rewarding for the family, Adib said.

"(It) is finding solutions for all of us," Adib said. "No one is immune to this."

The morning began with a grand opening presentation for more than 700 guests, with speakers including Dr. Joe Rogers, president and senior scientist for SHRI; Lee Peterson, president and CEO of Sun Health; state Rep. Bob Stump of Peoria, R-District 9; and foundation researchers, Dr. Thomas Beach, senior scientist for the Dr. W. Harold Civin Laboratory of Neuropathology; Dr. Holly Shill, director of the Thomas H. Christopher Center for Parkinson's Research; and Sabbagh.

"Today represents a sig-

nificant step forward in battling age-related diseases as we unveil the institute's newest facility, which doubles our research space — providing the opportunity to expand into new areas of study, increase the number of clinical trials and expand our brain bank into a full-body tissue repository," Rogers said.

Guests toured both buildings of the SHRI, and interacted with the scientists at work in the labs including the new pathology lab.

Joy and Chuck McCracken of Sun City West said that they were enjoying seeing the new facility.

"It's fantastic," Chuck said. "The whole operation

is really wonderful to have in our own community."

The couple said they had signed up to donate their bodies to the SHRI.

"It's a service to the community and medical science," Joy McCracken said. "And it helps our children because they won't have to experience the disposal of our bodies."

To date, \$4.5 million has been raised for the new building. The institute expansion is part of Sun Health's \$25 million capital campaign, "Superior Healthcare — the Treasure within Sun Health," which also expands Boswell and Del E. Webb hospitals.

Joy Slagowski may be reached at 876-2514, or jslagowski@aztrib.com.

Anniversary signifies four decades of Sun Health service to the community

By Ronald D. Guziak
Special to the Independent

When Aug. 15, 2011 rolled around, a significant anniversary was realized that few recalled and probably no one celebrated. It is, however, a notable date in the history of Sun City, Sun City West and Sun City Grand. On this date 45 years ago, the first meeting of the Sun City Community Hospital was held and Burr Welch was named president and Chairman of the Board. For historians who remember, four other Board members were named including John Meeker, Bill Warriner, Mike Bross and Lue Leisy. Tom Austin and Donald Middleton were also in attendance at this first meeting.



Ronald Guziak

The decision that day was to rally the community to build the first hospital in Sun City. In 1966 the closest hospitals were in downtown Phoenix and a drive across the "desert" on Bell Road was certainly 45 minutes to an hour. Clearly the "new" Sun City deserved its own hospital and local physician base.

In 1970 Sun Health opened Boswell Memorial Hospital (now Banner Boswell Medical Center) to great fanfare. It was a symbol that the community had "arrived." Not only was it a great place for seniors to live well, but now the medical facilities were truly their own. From that point forward Sun Health grew the medical enterprise as rapidly as the area developed. A second hospital was added in Sun City West (now Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center), and 25 years ago the Sun Health Research Institute (now Banner Sun Health Research Institute) was developed with community support. Through the

years, many other services were added that were especially appropriate for the senior population.

Sun Health also ventured into providing the community with world-class senior housing. Today Grandview Terrace, The Colonnade and La Loma Village are all owned and operated by the Sun Health enterprise. All along, the community played a major role in the growth of the Sun Health enterprise through support of Sun Health Foundation. To date more than \$300 million has been raised from the community and this philanthropic support continues to reflect the desires of the community to ensure superior health care for all.

A major transition took place three years ago when Sun Health transferred ownership of the hospitals to Banner Health. This important transaction means that these treasured health resources are now part of one of the top 10 health systems in the country. For Sun Health it means that we can continue doing what we do best: generate philanthropic support for the hospitals and develop new services for residents outside hospital walls.

Philanthropy and service to local residents come full circle with the launch of Sun Health's community health programs. This fall, Sun Health will launch a community-based medication management program and a disease management program, designed to support residents with chronic conditions such as congestive heart failure and diabetes. Please read the special section in this week's Independent for more information about these programs.

Thank you for your continued support of health care, senior living and healthy living in our community.

Editor's Note: Ronald D. Guziak is president and CEO of Sun Health.

Banner Sun Health Research Institute conducts revolutionary study

JOY SLAGOWSKI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Volunteers are being sought for a study at the Banner Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City that its research and medical director says is thinking "totally out of the box."

The study delivers genetic code — DNA — into the brain through a surgical procedure which turns brain cells on, causing them to multiply through nerve growth factor.

"All of the body has the natural ability to heal," said Dr. Marwan Sabbagh. "And one of the healing factors is nerve growth factors."

Sabbagh said research has found that Alzheimer's patients are lacking in these nerve growth factors.

"And when nerve growth factors start to be produced, and start making brain cells, critical brain cells start to be produced and start making brain cells — critical brain

cells for memory to start to work again," Sabbagh said.

"This is really exciting stuff, way out there in terms of innovation."

Sabbagh said the procedure works by delivering DNA through a virus.

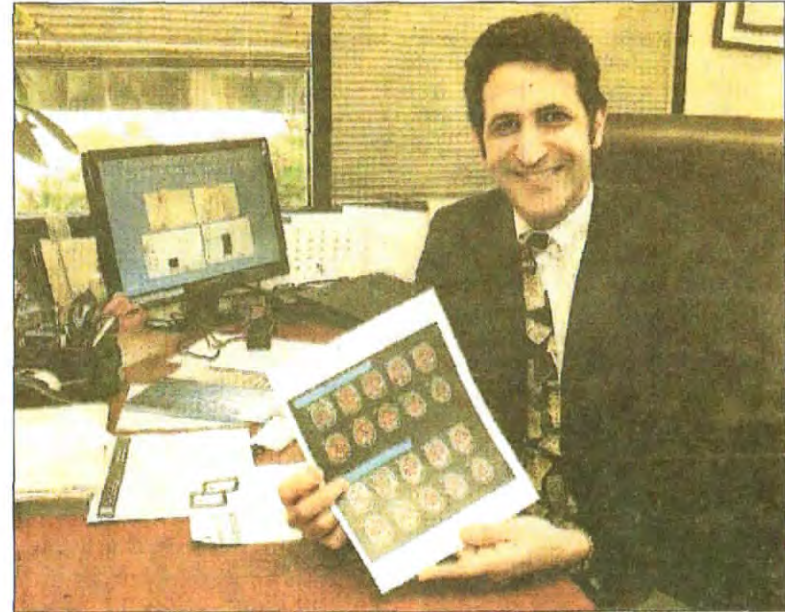
"The virus is the envelope, and the DNA is the letter," Sabbagh said. "The DNA inserted sends a message to the brain cells to start."

Sabbagh said a similar procedure has been performed on those with brain tumors for the past 10 years.

The SHRI is one of 10 in the United States conducting the study and the only non-university site involved.

Sabbagh said 10 local participants, age 55 to 80, with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease are needed for the study. An involved caregiver also is required.

For information on the study, call the SHRI at 623-876-5328.



ASHLEY LOWERY/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dr. Marwan Sabbagh, chief medical officer of Banner Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City, holds a PET scan showing increased metabolic activity in a brain following the drug trial.

Joy Slagowski may be reached at 623-876-2514 or jslagowski@yourwestvalley.com.

Study weighs facts affecting healthful aging

By Cecilia Chan

THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

Sun Health Research Institute is conducting a study to see what factors influence a person's ability to age healthfully.

Dr. Walter Nieri of the Center for Healthy Aging, said researchers also are looking at the role an age-restricted community may play in aiding successful aging.

The research will compare retirement community living, in which there are plenty of activities aimed at seniors, to non-age restricted communities.

"If we look at the Sun Cities area, there is a lot of socialization that is geared toward 55 and older," Nieri said. "They have a network that provides socialization. That is very important."

Retirement communities like Sun City Grand in Surprise also have recreational facilities that provide physical activity and stimulate the mind with offerings such as crafts and computer skills, he said.

One advantage for Sun Health is its neighbors. Potential participants are outside the center's back door. The institute is in Sun City, the nation's first and largest self-contained retirement community.



Helen Benner, a Peoria resident, is 87 and part of a Sun Health Research Institute study that is looking into why and how people can live into their 80s, 90s, and 100s.

It also is surrounded by age-restricted communities, including Sun City West and Peoria's Ventana Lakes and Westbrook Village.

"We have one of the largest number of

older-adults registry in a confined geographic area," Nieri said. "If you look at the Sun Cities area, it has one of the highest percentages of people 100 years of age and huge numbers of 80- and 90-year-

Longevity study

Dr. Walter Nieri, Sun Health Research Institute's Center for Healthy Aging director, is looking for participants for a longevity study. Seniors with more diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and those 80 and older are needed. Participants must be able to respond to questionnaire and interviews. To participate in the study, call Kathy O'Connor at 623-815-7677.

Six hundred people are registered in the data bank, ranging in age from 50 to 100-plus.

- » 77 participants age 85-89 years old.
- » 97 participants age 90-94 years old.
- » 78 participants age 95-99 years old.
- » 40 participants age 100-plus years old.
- » Rest are younger than 85.

olds.

"They are excited to participate in the longevity study. They have learned about life and perhaps will give us the secret to successful aging."

Longevity study can be used as a tool to help ensure optimal aging



Dr. Walter Nieri

Dr. Walter Nieri is the director of the Center for Healthy Aging at Sun Health Research Institute. He is overseeing a study to find out what allows people to live healthfully into their 80s, 90s and 100s.

Q: How are the center's preliminary findings in the longevity

study different from that of Dr. Thomas Perls' study on aging?

A: Dr. Perls is well known internationally for his longevity research and has done extensive work related to genetics and psychosocial factors of living long. He has focused on a national registry (Life Long Family Study) of centenarians utilizing sociodemographic, neurophysiological, psychosocial factors questionnaires similar to what we are utilizing. We hope to collaborate someday with other national studies. The Center for Healthy Aging at the Sun Health Research Insti-

tute began the longevity study with a more local population of older adults who predominately reside in retirement communities, e.g. Sun Cities. One of our goals would be to determine whether retirement communities not only contribute to increased longevity but also whether they enhance quality of life.

Q: You mentioned your specialty is looking at how stress affects longevity. Is that the main difference from Perls' work?

A: Regarding stress, there are many studies that utilize psychological testing to assess anxiety, depression, life events, perception of stress, etc. We are interested in correlating the psychological analysis with the physiological changes as seen in blood studies that reflect excessive stress. This may provide a better way to monitor stress and its effect on our health (e.g. similar to obtaining blood studies to monitor cholesterol).

Q: What are the implications of the findings so far for Baby Boomers and can they apply any of the factors such as reli-

giosity to extend their lives?

A: As the Baby Boomers become older, they will have greater and more variable expectations than our current population of older adults. Longevity studies can provide evidence-based information that Baby Boomers can utilize to help ensure optimal aging. Issues such as exercise, social support, religion, stress management, and other behaviors are only a few of the factors that contribute to health aging and longevity.

Q: You mentioned there were a number of studies on aging undertaken on the East Coast and some in California. Is the interest fueled by the Baby Boom generation that doesn't want to get old?

A: Longevity studies began when it became apparent that there was a growing number of older adults living longer and that there were issues associated with aging that were unique in comparing with the younger generation. Most of the centers studying longevity are located on the East Coast because that is where most of the larger academic centers were located.

With the growing number of older adults (70 million 65-year-olds by 2030), the need to study those factors that contribute to maintaining good health becomes very important. Exploring different cultural, socioeconomic, and geographical areas are necessary to get a true picture of what growing older means.

Q: Can you speak of the importance of the study for the medical care industry?

A: Longevity studies will provide for a more holistic approach to maintaining good health, beyond the traditional medical model. Models of care can also include components such as psychological (better stress management), sociological, (best living arrangements), physical (role of exercise), and cognition (keeping the memory intact); all of which we are addressing in our longevity interviews.

In view of the fact that a large percentage of the health-care dollars are spent on the elderly, having a healthier old adult population may help decrease health-care spending in addition to providing a better quality of life for the elderly.



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE LEIGHT/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Above: Banner Sun Health Research Institute intern Kayla Ann Yu, 17, of Peoria, breaks down a carcinogenic solution on Friday for safe disposal. **Below:** Intern Varun Patel, 17, prepares to slice rat-heart tissue on Friday to 5 microns thickness.

Banner Institute interns dive into DNA research

Students, experts pursue Alzheimer's treatment

By Ray Parker
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

A group of Valley teens spent their summer delving into the DNA of Alzheimer's disease at Banner Sun Health Research Institute, picking up skills useful for careers in science.

The pay may have been minimal, but the perks were plenty.

"It's exciting to experience all that's out there in the real science world," said Varun Patel, one of 16 high-school and college-undergraduate interns who joined institute researchers in Sun City.

Patel, 17, will be a senior at Dobson High School. The Mesa teen rented a room near the Institute this summer so

he could skip the daily commute across the Valley.

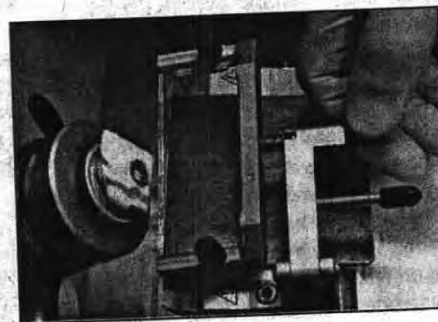
He worked with researchers to mimic heart attacks in rats in order to develop new treatments for Alzheimer's, including stem-cell therapy.

The students interned for eight weeks at the institute, part of a program to strengthen the bioscience industry. The institute's summer program accepts 16 students from hundreds of applications across the nation and is now in its 10th year.

The teens were paid \$1,000, but that wasn't the draw.

"This is my first internship, and I'll definitely be putting it on my college application," said Patel, who wants to study medicine.

The interns shadowed and helped



medical researchers involved in a variety of research areas, including cardiovascular diseases.

Kayla Ann Yu, 17, of Peoria, spent her time working on preventing early-age Alzheimer's. The Xavier College Preparatory High School graduate will attend the University of Arizona this fall

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Intern and Dobson High School senior Varun Patel, 17, uses a pipette to transfer a solution to several micro test tubes on Friday at Banner Sun Health Research Institute. Patel has been assisting in research using adult stem cells to regenerate rats' hearts following a heart attack. The institute's intern program promotes bioscience careers by providing qualified students the opportunity to work with experts.

CHARLIE LEIGHT/
THE REPUBLIC

Young students get taste of real-world bioscience

INTERNS

Continued from B1

and is planning on a career in medicine.

"We give (the rats) an antibody with 30- and 90-day exposure," Yu said. "When it dies, we looked at their brain tissue. It was good to experience this kind of research."

Senior scientist Sheri Lubahn has been researching new ways to prevent Alzheimer's.

"They actually get an appreciation for real science," Lubahn said of the students. Lubahn supervised several interns, including Asmit Sanghera, 18.

"I was so amazed by the entire process," said Sanghera, a senior this fall at Phoenix Country Day School in Paradise Valley. "The coolest part has been looking at the brain tissue."

The teens will present their findings at the end of the internship, on Friday.

SHRI nurtures future scientists

JOY SLAGOWSKI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

While many of her peers may be enjoying a relaxing summer at home or on vacation, Jane Kruchowsky of Glendale is spending eight weeks doing research in a science lab learning about immunohistochemistry.

The 20-year-old ASU West student is among 16 high school and college science students exploring careers in science and medicine as summer interns at Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City. She has a double major in psychology and life sciences.

"I should be graduating in less than a year, and of the two paths I am considering — university professor or going into research — this is pushing me to lean toward research," Kruchowsky said.

She's part of the trend of the interns, who over the last 10 years, have pursued careers in health care and science, with many of those advancing to graduate work in the fields.

The summer intern program matches high school and college interns with scientists to work in one of the institute's laboratories. The students help conduct a wide range of research including Alzheimer's and cardiovascular disease research, and learning scientific techniques, including cell culture isolation and working with DNA. The program continues through July 31.

Interns were selected from 150 applicants. Each will receive a

SEE SHRI A4



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY LOWERY/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Elizabeth Carter, in left photo, and Jane Kruchowsky, pictured at right, both of Glendale, work as interns at Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City.

SHRI

FROM A1

\$1,000 stipend at the end of the summer.

Kruchowsky, a graduate of Mountain Ridge High School, said her internship has been a great learning experience. She is working with adult stem cells and contributing to research for Parkinson's disease.

"I haven't had a lot of cellular microbiology, but a ton of general biology, chemistry and genetics," she said. "They are giving me books and papers to read. I love learning, and this is causing me to learn every day."

Elizabeth Carter, 19, of Glendale has returned as an intern for a second summer. She is a Mountain Ridge High School graduate in her third year at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., majoring in biochemistry. She plans to go to medical school upon graduation, and possibly get her PhD and conduct research.

Last summer she worked in the orthopedic gait analysis lab as part of the CORE Institute, where she recorded data measuring the improvements after a knee or hip replacement.

"We created a three-dimensional image of the patient and measured the angles and joints, and it was directly connected to the ortho clinic there," Carter said. "I

also got to see some surgeries."

This summer she is working with Dr. Mohamed Gaballa, a cardiovascular specialist who is using adult stem cells as part of his research in how to repair a heart after a heart attack. She is helping differentiate cell types and measuring their progress.

Lihfen Lue, a scientist doing work in the neuroinflammation lab, said the interns' experience with such things as the brain bank, whole body and tissue donations allows them to see how a research lab works, which literature is used and how to think about scientific subjects.

"Every year they give something back by producing data," Lue said. "But what we are most concerned

with is that they are stimulated and leave from here knowing what research is and how important it is to study human disease."

Lue said the internships provide an outlet to make the institute's work reach further into the community and inspire future scientists.

"We can have our experience and our knowledge help extend to students so they will become future physicians or even researchers," Lue said. "It broadens our purpose ... and makes our mission bigger since we know our experience is viable for future generations of scientists in the making."

Joy Slagowski may be reached at 623-876-2514 or jslagowski@yourwestvalley.com.

Sun Health unveils new logo, mission and commitments

By Kim Antoniou
Volunteer Contributor

Although the structure of Sun Health has changed, the local nonprofit organization's commitment to the community remains the same.

Lee Peterson, president and CEO for Sun Health, said, "While Sun Health has evolved from a 'provider' to a 'partner', we remain the nonprofit champion for healthcare in the West Valley. Our core focus is ensuring that community members have access to superior, local healthcare.

"Through donations to the Sun Health Foundation, volunteer support of the Sun Health Auxiliary and our community partnerships with Banner Health's area facilities — namely, Banner Boswell and Del E. Webb medical centers, Sun Health Research Institute — as well as our Grandview Terrace, La Loma Village and Colonnade life-care communities, we deliver on our lasting promise to ensure exceptional healthcare is available nearby. Your healthcare remains our Sun Health commitment."

To underscore their nonprofit community healthcare commitment, the board of directors of Sun Health adopted a new mission statement which reads: Sun Health exists to make a difference in people's lives through community partnerships that foster superior healthcare services in the West Valley.

Sandy Foell, chairman of the Sun Health board of directors, said, "Since the merging of our healthcare operations with the nonprofit Banner Health system, there have been some important changes to our structure. Still, Sun Health has never been more committed, more optimistic or more excited about the quality of healthcare in the West Valley. We are an organization that has undergone some significant changes — an organization that has new challenges as well as great opportunities to continue giving back to this special community. Together with you, we are a powerful healthcare champion — your advocate — for health and wellness."

After decades of building and operating hospitals and other nonprofit healthcare facilities in the West Valley, Sun Health has evolved into a new role. They have gone from operating hospitals and being a healthcare provider system to being a healthcare champion and advocate.

"Due to regulatory and legislative requirements along with rapid technological advances and payment constraints, it be-

came increasingly difficult for an independent healthcare network to ensure superior healthcare services for the community — even with the extremely generous philanthropic support provided by donors," said Pamela Meyerhoffer, president and CEO of Sun Health Foundation.

"Today, Sun Health Foundation's major philanthropic efforts continue to focus on helping to keep Banner Boswell and Del E. Webb medical centers among the best hospitals anywhere, supporting the world renowned scientific achievements of Sun Health Research Institute, aiding student nurses with tuition assistance, providing funding for Banner Olive Branch Senior Center and all the other local nonprofit healthcare facilities that previously were known by the Sun Health name. Community donations continue to be necessary in order to keep these marvelous facilities as great as they are," she said.

Sun Health Auxiliary is comprised of a group of dedicated volunteers who work on projects and events throughout the year to raise funds to support healthcare in the community. They also operate the hospital gift shops as well as thrift shops in Sun City and Sun City West that welcome donation of usable items. They will pick up large items such as furniture.

Sun Health Services has the important role of ensuring the full benefit and fulfillment of Sun Health's merger agreement with Banner Health. The Sun Health Services' board of directors is comprised of area leaders who have the West Valley's interests at heart. A total of some 75 community members lend their experience and expertise by serving on Sun Health's related boards.

Sun Health also has a refreshed logo to go with its redefined role. Ms. Meyerhoffer said, "Sun Health's value-proposition — how we benefit the community — is summed up in this phrase: 'Your health. Your community. Our lasting commitment.' Ensuring that West Valley communities have local access to superior quality healthcare services is our lasting commitment."

Ms. Foell said, "The combination of Sun Health with Banner Health ensures the provision of excellent quality healthcare for the west Valley well into the future for many years to come."

Editor's Note: This item was submitted by Kim Antoniou, manager, community engagement, Sun Health Auxiliary/Sun Health Foundation.

SUN CITY INDEPENDENT

April 15, 2009



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS SUN

Dr. Larry Sparks of the Sun Health Research Institute views slides in his lab last week. He's studying the effects of a therapeutic drug on the beta amyloid plaque, which precedes Alzheimer's disease.

SHRI expands studies

Trials recruit cancer patients

JOY SLAGOWSKI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun Health Research Institute, a service of Banner Health, is busy with multiple research projects.

Brian Browne, director of communications and education, said new trials are planned for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease research, as well as exercise and bladder cancer studies.

Dr. Larry Sparks, Senior Scientist and Head of the Roberts Laboratory for Neurodegenerative Disease Research at the institute, recently completed a clinical trial on a new medication having a positive effect on an important blood marker of cognitive function in Alzheimer's disease. Sparks was named the national principal investigator of the drug, and is in charge

of heading up a statewide study for further testing.

This particular drug helps clean up the plaque in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease, which is a huge deal, Browne said.

Sparks said he found the oral drug, RVX-208, both raised HDL levels in the blood and cleared out Amyloid-beta40 plaques that form in the brain of Alzheimer's patients.

"It's as good as immunotherapy and you don't need an injection," Sparks said. "It's a small molecule and gets where it needs to go, and is heart-friendly since it raises HDL."

Sparks will be organizing a statewide study on the use of the drug in the near future, he said, using the Arizona Clini-

SEE SHRI, A5

SHRI: Parkinson's study examines effects of exercise

FROM A1

cal Consortium of the Arizona's Alzheimer's Research Center.

"(SHRI) will be the lead center, and I will be the principal investigator," Sparks said. "And Dr. Marwan Sabagh will be the neurologist."

Sparks said the institute is seeking additional funding, and then will be organizing the research effort.

"We'll be looking for participants with mild cognitive impairment," Sparks said.

In addition to that study, the SHRI is conducting new trials in Parkinson's treatment.

One of them uses a low voltage stimulator to help control some of the physical symptoms of the disease. SHRI is the only place in the world conducting the study.

"A stimulator is placed on a pad behind the ears and on the tem-

ple, they (patients) don't feel it," Browne said.

"We are looking to see if some of the symptoms of Parkinson's, such as tremors, are affected."

Participants who are 50 and older with mild to moderate Parkinson's Disease receive the stimulation for just under an hour nearly every day on a schedule that lasts a couple of weeks.

Another 15 participants are needed for the study.

A second Parkinson's study is examining the link between exercise and Parkinson's symptoms, specifically whether exercise will reduce the severity of Parkinson's and help brain function.

"We give participants an exercise regime," Browne said. "They come in here and do the exercises, and we monitor them over a nine month period of time."

Those with mild to moderate Parkinson's in

good cognitive health, who are not involved with any other type of workout program, are sought to participate in this study.

Alzheimer's research includes the testing of two drugs that may affect the disease progression: a gamma secretase inhibitor and Dimebon, a drug that in early studies shows some improvement in memory, brain function and behavior.

"Dimebon is an approved drug in Russia as an anti-inflammatory," Browne said. "So we are able to fast-track a little quicker in the U.S., and trials thus far have very positive results."

The SHRI also is recruiting for a bladder cancer drug study for those 18 and older with transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder.

"We are getting into cancer trials, including prostate cancer," Brown said.

Nutritional studies

also are garnering a lot of attention.

"We just received results from a study the Sun Health Research Institute has been involved in looking at the effects of vitamin D in treating Alzheimer's," Browne said. "Results show that that it was not effective in treating Alzheimer's disease, which was disappointing."

Browne said other nutritional research indicates there are some foods that do help prevent the disease.

"We believe in using nutritional therapy in warding off Alzheimer's disease," Browne said. "Dr. Marwin Sabagh has effectively laid out a number of effective preventative supplements including folic acid, curry, tumeric root and green tea."

For information on how to participate in any of the studies, contact the SHRI at 623-876-5328.



CHRISTINE KEITH/THE REPUBLIC

Institute does work in Parkinson's study

Capitalizing on a larger talent pool of scientists after its acquisition by Banner Health, the Sun Health Research Institute has received a \$75,000 grant to study new treatments for Parkinson's disease, adding to the activities at the Northwest Valley facility.

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Above: Art Kaherl, 74, of Surprise, discusses with Dr. Holly Shill his treatments as a volunteer research subject at Sun Health Research Institute.

Art Kaherl
NORTHWEST VALLEY NEWS

DECEMBER 3, 2008

OVER

Grant lets Sun Health study Parkinson's

THE REPUBLIC/AZCENTRAL.COM

The Michael J. Fox Foundation has awarded the Sun Health Research Institute a \$75,000 grant to study new equipment that treats Parkinson's disease, adding to the growing list of activities at the Northwest Valley research facility.

The Parkinson's study is the institute's first major undertaking since it was acquired by Banner Health in September. The merger gave the institute a larger talent pool of scientists for such studies, since it now has access to resources at the Banner Alzheimer's Institute, a research facility in Phoenix.

The growth in local medical research doesn't only mean access to top-notch care for local residents. It is another piece in the economic-development puzzle for Surprise, the Sun Cities and other area communities, improving their prospects for attracting high-paying jobs in the fields of health and sciences.

"It just sort of shows there's activity going on here, and it plays into our overall strategy in trying to create some jobs in the



CHRISTINE KEITH/THE REPUBLIC

Art Kaherl, 74, of Surprise, has been a volunteer Parkinson's research subject at the Sun Health Research Institute.

whole medical arena, whether it's health care or research and development," Surprise Economic Development Director John Hagen said.

The new Parkinson's study examines the use of Nexalin headgear, a pad that attaches to patients' forehead. Electrodes connected to the pad emit low-frequency triggers that are sup-

posed to stop Parkinson's tremors. The treatments are administered one hour a day, five days a week, for two weeks during the study.

What has researchers excited is Nexalin's "no fuss, no muss" appeal. Surgery is not required for the treatment.

"The procedure is non-invasive because it's actually headgear that you wear. It would be invasive if it went inside your body," said Banner Health spokeswoman Elle Shelley.

The Institute has six participants for the study, and a goal of getting 18 more.

Since opening its clinical-trial program eight years ago, Sun Health has conducted a variety of studies, and the Parkinson's trial is just one of a handful currently getting underway, according to Brian Browne, the Research Institute's public information officer. Eleven clinical studies are preparing to enroll participants, he said.

Most of Sun Health's trials involve those afflicted with Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, though one under way is a bladder-cancer clinical trial.

Browne said the Valley, par-

See **GRANT** Page 5

Sun Health to start Parkinson's study

GRANT

Continued from Page 3

ticularly retirement areas like the Sun Cities, are prime targets for such clinical studies because it is in these communities "where we are seeing a number of neurological degenerative diseases of aging."

Banner's ownership transition, however, will continue to affect Surprise's efforts to get a biotech campus off the ground, Hagen said.

"Until that acquisition is fully digested, they're not going to be as big a player as we like," Hagen said, adding he expects the transition to last another six to 12 months.

Surprise, however, continues to pursue other medical and biotechnology opportunities.

The city recently announced that three science-related firms are interested in leasing the old City Hall building on Bell

Road to serve as an incubator for start-up companies. City leaders are weighing each option, and a decision eventually will go before the City Council.

The city will not elaborate on the proposals until discussions proceed.

The city also has identified several key land parcels with potential for biotech development. It has put the most emphasis on 500-plus acres south of Bell Road and Bullard Avenue that is expected to become the future downtown. Sun Health Properties, a land-ownership group separate from the research institute, has a stake in that property.

There also is land at the city's Southwest Railplex, bordered by Peoria Avenue and Dysart, Waddell and Litchfield roads, and at the Prasada development along Loop 303, Hagen said.

For information on the new Parkinson's clinical trial, call 623-875-6500.

Reporters Cecilia Chan, Tony Lombardo and Erin Zlomek contributed to this story.

Sun Health Research Institute trials

HOME BASED ASSESSMENT STUDY: Goal is to explore the most effective, efficient and economical methods for conducting Alzheimer's disease prevention trials. This study will comprise males and females, 75 or older, with no history of dementia, who live within 15 miles of Sun City. Emphasis has been placed on minority participation.

BAPINEUZUMAB: Study will determine if Bapineuzumab can stabilize cognitive decline in Alzheimer's disease. Participants must be age 50 to 89 with mild to moderate Alzheimer's. Caregivers must be able to attend all clinic visits with patient.

GAMMA SECRETASE INHIBITOR: Study hopes to slow the decline of Alzheimer's disease. Participants must meet the criteria for diagnosis of mild to moderate Alzheimer's.

ALZHEIMER'S STUDY OF ABT-089: Researchers seek to determine if an investigational medication is beneficial for improving memory, cognition and daily functioning. Qualified participants will take ABT-089 or placebo along with their other medications. Six different doses of the oral medication will be compared to placebo. The study is over a 16-week period.

DIMEBON: Dimebon is an oral medication being tested as a treatment for Alzheimer's disease. Results from a one-year study of Dimebon in mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's disease show statistically significant improvements in memory, thinking, function and behavior.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE CLINICAL TRIALS: Pramipexole or Mirapex immediate-release is approved by the FDA for the treatment of early and advanced Parkinson's disease. Experts believed Parkinson's-disease patients would benefit from a Pramipexole tablet that could be given just once a day. They developed a new form of Pramipexole that is an extended-release tablet, meaning the ingredients are released slowly and constantly during a whole day. The study medication will be adjusted to the clinically appropriate dose and compared to placebo. The study lasts 33 weeks.

DROXIDOPA STUDY: Study will investigate the effectiveness of Droxidopa in treating symptoms of neurogenic orthostatic hypotension in patients with primary autonomic failure non-diabetic neuropathy or Beta Hydroxylase deficiency. The investigational medication, Droxidopa, is believed to enhance norepinephrine levels in the body, leading to more stable blood pressure and blood flow to reduce the dizziness and fainting suffered by people with NOH.

NEXALIN STUDY: Study uses a medical device to treat the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Nexalin is a device that provides low levels of electric stimulation to the scalp/brain while the patient is seated in a recliner. Study researchers will be looking at motor symptoms of Parkinson's as well as non-motor symptoms before and after treatment. The study will last 14 weeks.

EXERCISE STUDY: Researchers seek to determine if regular exercise that involves walking with poles can reduce Parkinson's disease severity and cause favorable changes in brain function in people with the disease. Study presents possibility of improving balance, walking, aerobic fitness, and brain function in patients. Duration is nine months.

SPECTRUM SPI-611 BLADDER CANCER STUDY: This seeks to evaluate bladder cancer recurrence rates. Participants age 18 and older with transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder are needed.

Sun Health's Rogers receives Lifetime Achievement Award

STAFF REPORT

Joseph Rogers, Ph.D., president and senior scientist at Sun Health Research Institute, received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2008 Health Care Heroes Awards breakfast presented by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Thursday.

Eleven others were honored in 10 categories at the event sponsored by the Phoenix Business Journal, Abrazo Health Care, Phoenix Childrens Hospital, A.T. Still University, Delta Dental and The Plaza Cos.

Rogers is internationally recognized for his pioneering research on the damage inflammation does to brain tissue in Alzheimer's patients.

The breakthrough investigative techniques by Rogers and collaborating scientists allow researchers to test different treatments that may have a positive impact on Alzheimer's and other pervasive human disorders.

Rogers has devoted a quarter century of his scientific life to finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease. Along the way, he has been the motivating force behind the development of an internationally recognized research institute that has recorded breakthrough research in not only Alzheimer's disease but also Parkinson's disease and arthritis.

"Once you've seen what Alzheimer's disease does to people and their

families, you can't turn your back on it," Rogers said.

Rogers is the recipient of many honors, including the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award in Alzheimer's Disease Research from the National Alzheimer's Association for dedicating himself to helping millions of people around the world with his research.

Health Care Heroes include Dr. Oliver Harper, senior physician and co-founder of Banner Arizona Medical Clinic, in the physician category.

Peggy Pollay of Sun Health Auxiliary was a finalist in the volunteer category.



Submitted photo

Joe Rogers, founder and president of Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona.

The treasure within



Cleo Roberts, top right, applauds Tuesday during the dedication of the new Sun Health Institute building bearing her name. She and her husband, Bob, gave the institute its start. Bottom right, pathology technician Jyothi Bachalakuri explains the use of a machine used in brain research to from left, Sue Schreiber of Surprise, Nettie Evans of Sun City and Joy McCracken of Sun City West. At left, plaques bearing names of financial donors line the walkway leading to the new building.



STORY BY JOY SLAGOWSKI
PHOTOS BY PETE PALLAGI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

When Dr. Marwan Sabbagh, director of clinical research at the Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research, gave the first tour of the Sun Health Research Institute's new \$5 million building to his parents Tuesday, it wasn't just a proud family moment.

It demonstrated to the Sabbaghs how their son is helping their generation, as well as gen-

erations to come, live well through their retirement years.

The SHRI is engaged in Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, prostate cancer and arthritis research. And the new expansion doubles the center's size.

Sabbagh's father, Adib, a heart surgeon in Tucson, and mother, Entisar, an anthropologist, toured the SHRI new 36,000-square-foot research building with their son, who explained the functions of the facility's first floor labora-

tories and offices.

Amy Rangel, a lab assistant, told the group on the tour how she divides a single blood draw to be analyzed for several different studies.

"We fractionalize every vial," Rangel said. "We have seven studies for biomarkers, which track and predict disease."

The SHRI is a "triple threat," Sabbagh said, engaged in pharmaceutical, state and federal studies,

SEE SUN HEALTH, A5

Sun Health dedicates new research institute building

SUN HEALTH New building doubles research capacity

FROM THE Sun Health researchers for the family...
 "We just started a federal study on the study of fish oil for the treatment of Alzheimer's and we have vaccination studies and cutting-edge blockbuster drug (antidotes)."
 Sabbagh's father, Adib, said he was happy to see the new building completed.
 "The demand was up to expand research," Adib said. "It's especially good to see that collaboration, and not only have one person's (contribution)."
 Adib said that the family immigrated from Iraq 45 years ago, and his son was born in New York.
 Knowing that Sabbagh works in clinical research

...is finding solutions for all of us," Adib said. "No one's immune to this."
 The morning began with a grand opening presentation for more than 700 guests, with speakers including Dr. Joe Rogers, president and senior scientist for SHRI; Lee Peterson, president and CEO of Sun Health; state Rep. Bob Stump of Peoria R-District 9; and foundation researchers, Dr. Thomas Beach, senior scientist for the Dr. W. Harold Civin Laboratory of Neuropathology; Dr. Holly Shill, director of the Thomas H. Christopher Center for Parkinson's Research; and Sabbagh.

...which doubles our research space... providing the opportunity to expand into new areas of study, increase the number of clinical trials and expand our brain bank into a full-body tissue repository," Rogers said.
 Guests toured both buildings of the SHRI and interacted with the scientists at work in the labs including the new pathology lab.
 Joy and Chuck McCracken of Sun City West said that they were enjoying seeing the new facility.
 "It's fantastic," Chuck said. "The whole operation

...really wonderful to have in our own community."
 The couple said they had signed up to donate their bodies to the SHRI.
 "It's a service to the community and medical science," Joy McCracken said. "And it helps our children because they won't have to experience the disposal of our bodies."
 To date, \$4.5 million has been raised for the new building. The institute expansion is part of Sun Health's \$25 million capital campaign, "Superior Healthcare — the Treasure within Sun Health," which also expands Boswell and Del E. Webb hospitals.
 Joy Slagowski may be reached at 876-2514, or js-lagowski@aztrib.com.

SHRI celebrates 20th anniversary

Sun Health Research Institute will celebrate 20 years of research, discovery and hope and help to build possibilities for the future through support of the institute's expansion at the 20th Anniversary Gala at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 11, at the Wigwam Resort and Spa, 300 Wigwam Boulevard, Litchfield Park.

Proceeds benefit the \$5 million expansion of Sun Health Research Institute, which is currently under way.

The event features Art Linkletter as he talks about "The Gift of Aging."

The event features a silent auction that will include a diamond and tanzanite necklace valued at \$52,850 and a signed Salvador Dali lithograph valued at \$1,500. Holiday

or all occasion shopping for friends and family also will be available at the "giftique."

Table sponsorships in support of the evening also are available. Research Table Sponsor is Cleo Roberts. Scientific Discovery Table Sponsors are Edith Brozka, Hospice of Arizona, and Bob and Nancy Root. Corporate Table Sponsors are Adultcare Assistance Homecare, BlueCross BlueShield of Arizona, Carefree Partners, Jennings Strouss, Birt and Louisa Kellam, M&I Wealth Management, MedisunOne, Northern Trust, RBC Dain Rausher, Summit Builders, Surprise Center Development Co., LLC, and Wells Fargo.

Tickets to attend this celebration are \$150 per person, \$25 of which is tax deductible. For tickets or to reserve a table, call Sun Health Special Events at 623-876-4931.

SHRI breaks expansion ground

Facility will double in size, capability

By Matt Loeschman
Independent Newspapers

The Sun Health Research Institute is expanding its community service by expanding its dimensions.

SHRI, 10505 W. Santa Fe Drive, recently broke ground on a \$5 million, 36,000-square-foot building expansion expected to

double the size and capabilities of its age-related disease bioresearch by early next year.

"A special blend of scientists, philanthropists, community residents and volunteers are the driving force behind the institute's success," said Joseph Rogers, Ph.D., SHRI's senior scientist and president. "It's been a winning combination that also will be the life-blood of the institute's future."

Sun Health officials were

Related link

www.shri.org

quick to thank the public for making the expansion possible.

"The Sun Health Research Institute was built with contributions from the community," explained Pamela Meyerhoffer, Sun Health Foundation chief executive officer. "It is extremely gratifying that the tradition is continuing so that Sun Health

Research Institute can expand and continue its life-changing science."

Funds to construct the new research building recently reached the halfway mark, Sun Health officials said. To date, more than \$2.5 million of the \$5 million needed has been raised by the Sun Health Foundation.

Sun City resident Laura Sternhagen will contribute to the fund-raising effort.

"You cannot ask for a better

cause," she said. "This is life-changing research going on right in our back yard. I feel it is of the utmost importance and I plan to help financially."

SHRI is a nonprofit research center, encompassing scientific research into the causes and prevention of age-related diseases as well as translation of these discoveries into clinical trials researching drugs and treat-

See Expansion — Page 5

Expansion

Continued From Page 1

ments. Investigating the causes of and treatments for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, arthritis, cancer and other age-related diseases are more than 70 scientists and staff members.

SHRI collaborates with and works alongside such institutions as Johns Hopkins, Harvard and Duke.

Additionally, the institute, together with its Arizona consortium partners, has been designated by the National Institutes of Health as one of just 29 Alzheimer's Disease Centers in the nation and the first state-sponsored Arizona Parkinson's Disease Center was established at SHRI. The institute is a collaborative partner with the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) in the hunt to find biomarkers that can identify those with the greatest risk of contracting Alzheimer's.

According to Sun Health officials, three major aspects of the building expansion include:

- Enlarging the Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research, enabling more trials to be conducted. The center now conducts

Highlights of The Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research at Sun Health Research Institute

- Nearly 10,000 visits have been made since opening on July 1, 2000, including almost 700 visits in 2006 and 2,900 visits in 2005.
- Patients and participants visit from across the country (Colorado, California, Florida and Texas) as well as from all over Arizona including Tucson, Green Valley, Flagstaff, Payson and Prescott.
- Nearly 50 clinical studies have been performed, including 25 clinical trials. Among these are three of the six primary prevention trials in Alzheimer's disease.
- The center has the distinction of having the highest enrollment nationally in a number of studies.
- One of two sites doing the National Institutes of Health ADNI trial in Arizona with nine enrolled participants.
- One of seven sites nationally doing the third-generation vaccine study and one of 30 sites doing the second-generation vaccine study.

34 clinical trials and studies.

- A full-body tissue repository is evolving through an expansion of the existing brain bank to enhance research capabilities related to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

- The Glen and Betty Morin Center for Oncology Research will be established in the future to conduct necessary cancer studies.

The \$5-million campaign to expand SHRI is part of "Superior Healthcare — The Treasure Within Sun Health," a \$25-million capital campaign under way to increase capacities and capabili-

ties within the health care network, including Sun Health's Boswell and Del E. Webb Memorial hospitals.

Ms. Meyerhoffer said the building expansion is important, but what occurs inside is paramount.

"At Sun Health, the staff, physicians, scientists and volunteers need buildings in which to work," she said. "However, what is most important is the care they provide and the discoveries they make that will help lead to new treatments for and possible prevention of devastating diseases."

To encourage individuals to increase their levels of giving, spe-

cial incentives are in place for the campaign.

The first 50 donors of \$20,000 or more receive personalized "Treasure Within" geode bookends with hand-crafted wooden bases with engraved plates listing the campaign's theme and donor's name. More than 20 donors have already qualified for the "Treasure Within" geode bookends.

Amethyst crystals are being presented to the first 100 donors of \$5,000 to \$19,999 and to date, 61 donors have qualified for these crystals.

For more information about the "Treasure Within" campaign or to make a donation, call the Sun Health Foundation at 876-5330.

Post your comments on this issue at www.newszapforums.com/forum29. Reach News Editor Matt Loeschman at 972-6101 or mloeschman@newszap.com.

'A Reputation for Discovery ... Reasons for Hope'

Research Institute enters new digs

JOY SLAGOWSKI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun Health Research Institute's Research Day event was a double celebration, Friday. Paired up were a ground breaking of the expansion project and a showcase of the institute's achievements.

"A Reputation For Discovery ... Reasons for Hope" as the event was called, included a presentation by Harry Johns, president/CEO of the Alzheimer's Association, based in Chicago.

Johns praised the institute's research initiatives, saying there will be 16 million Americans who have Alzheimer's by the middle of this century, if researchers are unable to find a cure.

"It's a great asset you have here, not only for the community, but research in America and worldwide," Johns said. "The impact is not only on the individuals, but on caregivers and families."

Mary Jo West, Phoenix's first female news anchor, sang an original song written for the occasion, "Searching For a Happy Ending," which tells



PETE PALLAS/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Harry Johns, president/CEO of the Alzheimer's Association, praises the Sun Health Research Institute during the ground-breaking ceremony at the institute Friday in Sun City.

the story of a person dealing with their spouse's struggle with Alzheimer's.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, SHRI's president and senior scientist, discussed recent scientific advancements originating from the research institute and its brain bank and talked about the projects planned in the future, which will be made possible by the expansion project. In addition to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's research, the institute will be conducting fibromyalgia and arthritis research. They also plan to study diabetes, heart

disease, stroke and conduct cancer research.

The SHRI ground breaking, at 10515 Santa Fe Drive in Sun City, signifies the halfway mark in the Sun Health Foundation's fund-raising efforts, allowing construction to begin on the \$5 million, 36,000-square-foot expansion that will double the size of the facility by early 2007. The expansion will allow more clinical research trials, a full body tissue bank that will assist in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's research and the Glen and Betty Morin Center for Oncology Research.

OVER

DAILY NEWS-SUN

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2004

Sun Health research makes more inroads in treatment of Alzheimer's

FOR THE DAILY NEWS-SUN

A recent discovery by a scientist at Sun Health Research Institute that will provide therapeutic alternatives for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease has been accepted for publication in two prestigious scientific journals.

Yong Shen, M.D., Ph.D., head of the Halde-man Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology at SHRI, found that amyloid-protein kills brain cells, or neurons, through a membrane protein that contains a death signal that can trigger a cascade of destructive degeneration of the cells of Alzheimer's brains.

The discovery, which was published in the most recent editions of the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences, USA, and Journal of Neuroscience, comes on the heels of Shen's discovery last year of an enzyme, beta-secretase (BACE), that helps to generate the amyloid protein which is present at significantly elevated levels in Alzheimer's brains.

That discovery was published in the January 2003 edition of Nature Medicine.

Shen's most recent finding indicates a correlation between the elevated BACE enzymes and the amyloid protein in Alzheimer's brains. That discovery supports the indication that the BACE enzymes play an essential role in amyloid production in the brain with Alzheimer's disease.

These important results will not only

advance our understanding of pathogenesis of Alzheimer's disease, but will also provide alternative therapeutic targets for Alzheimer's treatments," Shen said.

The scientists at Sun Health Research Institute have earned an international reputation for breakthroughs for some of the most debilitating age-related diseases affecting seniors, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Since its founding in 1986, the institute, together with its Arizona consortium partners, has been designated by the National Institutes of Health as one of just 29 Alzheimer's Disease Centers in the nation. In addition, the first state-sponsored Arizona Parkinson's Disease Center was established at Sun Health in collaboration with Mayo Clinic-Scottsdale and others.

Sun Health continues extensive research

Researcher strives for more Alzheimer break-throughs

By Geno Lawrenzi
Independent Newspapers

Alzheimer's Disease is a disorder where neurons in the brain die. The disease is progressive and leads to deterioration of memory, senility, dementing disorders, neurodegeneration and eventually death.

The definition above does not come out of a medical dictionary. It is how Dr. D. Lawrence Sparks' defines the disease he has spent the better part of his professional career fighting as senior scientist and head of the Laboratory of Neurodegenerative Disease Research at the Sun Health Research Institute.

There, with a talented staff of researchers, Dr. Sparks is

involved with an intense program that is investigating the link between heart disease and Alzheimer's Disease. And his progress is so significant, people in high places are starting to take notice.

A native of Des Moines, Iowa, Dr. Sparks earned his doctorate in biochemistry from the Medical University of South Carolina in 1982. He achieved two post-doctoral fellowships with the Sander-Brown Center on Aging and the Department of Neurology at the University of Kentucky Medical Center.

One of his key discoveries — and one that could lead to significant progress in the search for a better treatment

See Research — Page 3

Research

Continued From Page 1

for Alzheimer's — is drinking distilled water could help reduce the risk of AD.

Another find is there is a relationship between AD and heart disease. In heart disease, plaque narrows the blood vessels, leading to heart deterioration. Plaque also causes problems when it "gets tangled in the brain," Dr. Sparks explained. "But in the brain, the plaque is a deposit in the tissue itself — I call them lesions in the brain."

He shrugged. "Maybe coronary disease is a forerunner to Alzheimer's. That is one of the things we are examining."

His pioneered research is recognized around the globe by scientists who are intrigued by the scientist's discovery of a link between cholesterol levels and the development of AD. His team's research findings suggest a connection between copper ion found in tap water, its impact on cholesterol and the development of AD.

By feeding cholesterol to rabbits in test situations,

researchers at the Sun Health Research Institute were able to produce lesions in the brain that were similar to those found in patients suffering from AD.

"When we took the animals off cholesterol, the lesions disappeared," he said. "In a three-week period, the lesions were reduced by 40 percent. That is significant."

Dr. Sparks has spent the last two decades of his life working toward a cure for AD.

"Trace amounts of copper elements in tap water are common in many local, national and international water supplies," he noted.

"Drinking trace amounts of copper ion in tap water may have a more direct effect on the body than does copper in food or inert copper such as that found in metal used in utensils, jewelry or water pipes."

While the EPA's maximum allowable contaminant level of copper in drinking water is set at 1.3 parts per millimeter (PPM), Arizona's drinking water is set at 0.54 ppm.

"Seventeen different things happen in the brain of AD

patients that are also found in the brains of rabbits taking cholesterol," he continued.

His interest in AD is more than just professional. When his father died at the age of 79, he had the disease.

"Think of the brain as an eight-cylinder engine," Dr. Sparks said. "Pull out one wire, the engine still runs. But pull three, and it stops running."

"It could be a combination of things that sets off the disease — cholesterol, smoking, drinking tap water or all of the above. I am presently running clinical trials on Statin, which helps lower cholesterol. Statin could benefit some patients."

"Anything a person does to create a healthy heart will also create a healthy mind. That is where we are and that is where we're going."

AD is a serious concern in West Valley retirement communities, he said, because "to buy a home here, you must be 55 or older. The rate of AD is higher because of a person's age. It takes 60 to 70 years for Alzheimer's to take effect in an individual."

"When a neuron in the brain is dead, it stays dead" he said.

Dr. Sparks has a strong feeling researchers are close to an effective treatment for AD.

While a complete cure may not be possible, researchers and the medical profession could slow down the progress of the disease.

"A slowing might be all we can expect, but we need to

know more about it," he said. "That's what we're doing here. I compare it to neurons taking a trip from Phoenix to Tucson., with not all of the neurons starting the trip at the same time."

While research at the Institute is funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health, Alzheimer's Association, Arizona Disease Control Research Center, the Michael J. Fox Foundation and other contributions from individuals and private foundations, he said his research program still needs more money.

"We are not fully funded," he said. "I recently had to let one nurse coordinator go because we didn't have the money to pay her salary."

He recently launched another clinical trial, Aladdin, to test a drug that could improve cognitive function and slow the progression of AD. The Sun Health Research Institute is one of only two sites in the U.S. holding such trials.

Dr. Sparks has published his work in more than 100 medical journals on subjects ranging from AD to heart disease and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), which he calls "The Alzheimer's disease of infancy."

Sun Health Research Institute's president and senior scientist is Dr. Joseph Rogers, who is internationally recognized for his pioneering work on the damage inflammation causes to brain tissue and how it impacts AD.

Sun Health reflects on healthy advances

ERIN REEP
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A "pioneer mentality" and dramatic growth has catapulted Sun Health Research Institute into national prominence, area doctors and medical administrators said Tuesday.

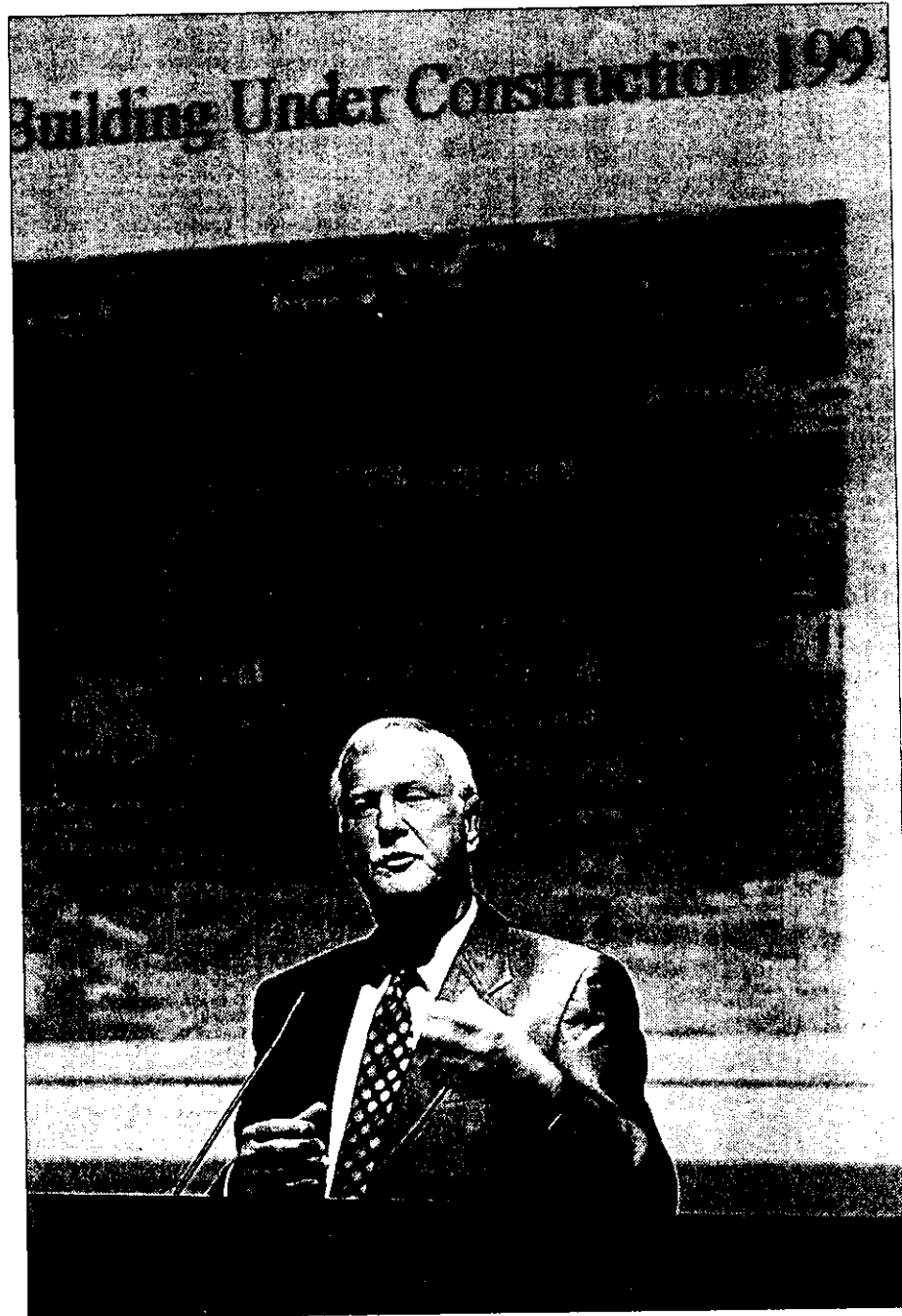
About 35 people attended "New Developments at the Sun Health Research Institute" Tuesday morning in the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital Auditorium.

Dr. Joe Rogers, SHRI president, Dr. Jeff Joyce, senior scientist and head of the Thomas H. Christopher Center for Parkinson's Research, and Dr. Marwan Sabbagh, director of the Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research, were the featured speakers.

"Anniversaries are a great time, a time to pause and reflect a little bit, and a time to look forward," said Sun Health CEO Lee Peterson as he introduced the speakers.

Sun Health is a community-based and a needs-based health organization, he said, adding that another important aspect of Sun Health's mission is its devotion to wellness research and education.

Rogers recalled the history of the Research Institute's founding in 1986 and showed slides of the facilities where SHRI was located. The first building in Sun City was small and housed a staff of two people.



Dr. Joe Rogers, president of Sun Health Research Institute, speaks about the institute's history and future at a presentation at Del E. Webb Hospital.

"Our faculty has grown dramatically since we started," Rogers said. There are 27 M.D.- or Ph.D.- level scientists on staff, along with 78 technical and clerical staff and 30 volunteers — two of which are retired Ph.D.s. Two new buildings housing research and laboratories were constructed in 1991-1992.

Once virtually unknown, "Our Alzheimer's research has gained international recognition now," Rogers said.

Rogers praised the level of community support for the Research Institute, calling the Sun Cities' contribution the "bricks and mortar" of the work, providing for the facilities and equipment of the institute. Grants from the National Institutes of Health and the Alzheimer's Association are funding the clinical trials and day-to-day research, according to Rogers and information from the SHRI.

Rogers highlighted the contribution of the SHRI Brain Bank, one of the most successful programs in the country for acquiring brain tissue for research. Joyce added the bank has had "remarkable success" in recruiting Arizonans with Parkinson's for brain tissue donation. There are currently 76 brains of Parkinson's patients in the bank, with 35 of those collected in the last four years, Joyce said.

"I hope you can capture some of the excitement of all of us," Joyce said. "(SHRI) doubled the faculty every five years, we doubled our grant money every five years. There's simply no institute that matches that kind of growth," he said.

Sun Health, Barrow Neurological Institute, Mayo Clinic and Arizona State University comprise the consortium formed in 1997, which received a large NIH grant toward its research in 2000.

Joyce gave a brief description of his research that focuses on the loss of dopamine in the brain. The goal of the Christopher center's research is to slow the progression of Parkinson's, Joyce said. One current project studies a theory about protective agents produced by neurons in the brain. Neurons normally produce a protective agent, which is lacking in the brains of those with Parkinson's disease, Joyce explained. Researchers are trying to find out if they can create drugs that simulate production of those agents, thus slowing the progression of Parkinson's.

Long-term goals of the Christopher center are to try and get more grant funding, develop connections and scientific collaborations between

universities and SHRI, and raise \$1.5 million in the next three years to hire more scientists.

Sabbagh highlighted the uniqueness of the Sun Cities for research of this kind. "What better place to study aging than the epicenter of American aging — that is, Sun City?" he said.

The Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research began with four people in 2000 and has grown to more than 19 people, he said. The center conducts research into the causes and manifestations of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. The center has gained two large, high-profile studies — the Alzheimer's Disease Anti-Inflammatory Prevention Trial (ADAPT) and study conducted by Dr. Larry Sparks on the use of statins in the prevention of Alzheimer's. ADAPT was the first in the U.S. to study the prevention of Alzheimer's through the use of anti-inflammatory drugs. Conducted at four sites, the SHRI was initially the smallest and least-known site in the study.

"When we started the study, we were the rookies; we were new," Sabbagh said.

"Now, we are the marquee, the flagship, the juggernaut of that study," he said. Sun Health had the most success

with recruitment and had the scientific and administrative infrastructure the study needed. The national recruitment goal nationally is 2,625 for the study; so far, SHRI has recruited 725 participants.

"It's a pioneer mentality — which is what Arizona is all about, which is what Sun City is all about," Sabbagh said.

Sparks' study of the use of statins to treat Alzheimer's was the first trial of its kind in North America. Now statin studies are the "hot thing" in Alzheimer's research, Sabbagh said. "And it started here. It started in the Sun Cities."

New studies conducted at SHRI include the homocysteine study on the use of vitamins to treat Alzheimer's, a second, smaller cholesterol/statins study, an estrogen prevention study called PRE-PARE, — using estrogen to prevent Alzheimer's in women, and SELECT— using selenium and vitamin E to prevent prostate cancer in men.

For information about any of Sun Health Research Institute's clinical trials, call the Sun HealthLine at 876-5432.

Erin Reep can be reached at 876-2532 or at ereep@aztrib.com

Sun Health sets Alzheimer's trials

By Jim Gintonio
The Arizona Republic

Dr. Marwan Noel Sabbagh figures he's in the right place at the right time as director of the Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City as it prepares for two significant trials targeting Alzheimer's disease.

"I've always been interested in the disease and aging in the brain," said Sabbagh, who recently assumed his post after serving for three years as an assistant professor in the department of neurosciences and neurological surgery in the School of Medicine at the University of California-San Diego.

"The most-exciting area in medicine right now is the brain and neurology. I think we are where heart research and cardiology was 30 years ago. Every year, our advances move forward in our understanding of Alzheimer's and of the brain itself. We are really making significant breakthroughs in understanding how Alzheimer's disease comes about.

"We hope to have effective treatments very, very soon, within five to 10 years."

Testing is being done worldwide to come up with drugs that can treat the disease, retard its progress and someday possibly prevent it. Two major trials are planned at the Sun City clinic, and both hold high promise, Sabbagh said.



Marwan Noel Sabbagh

One involves the drug Lipitor, currently being used to treat cholesterol and heart problems. It will be used in unique ways in the Alzheimer's trials, but Sabbagh is reluctant to discuss specifics until work officially starts, which could be within two weeks.

A bigger trial could be one starting in about three months. It will be the first of its kind, one that will attempt to determine if taking certain medication can prevent Alzheimer's in people who are at risk. An overwhelming risk factor seems to be a person over 70 who has a family history of Alzheimer's.

"The thinking is that there are certain people at risk for developing it," Sabbagh said. "It's a disease of aging, and as you get older, the risk of developing a disease increases. Five percent of the people have Alzheimer's at the age of 65, and that doubles every five years. It goes from 5 to 10 to 20 percent and so on. It's very staggering."

Those involved in the clinical tests will get medications in a blinded fashion and be followed for a period of seven

FYI

Anyone interested in participating in one of the Alzheimer's clinical studies at the Sun Health Research Institute is asked to call (623) 875-6500 for details. Two major trials are scheduled to start before the end of the year. A participant can take part in one test only.

years. Similar testing is planned at three other sites nationally.

The three key research areas focus on three groups: people at risk and finding ways to prevent the development of the disease; people who are just starting to develop Alzheimer's manifestations and trying to arrest those symptoms, and those who have already started a decline and looking for effective treat-

ments.

The Sun Cities area is a good testing ground because of its concentration of senior citizens, who are most vulnerable to Alzheimer's, Sabbagh said. If the trial goals can't be met with Sun City volunteers, others from around the Valley will be contacted.

The overall picture is tricky, Sabbagh said.

"This was known before as senility, dementia or just normal aging," he said. "'Grandma, her marbles weren't always there, but that's OK, that's just part of aging.'

"Well, a lot of people do have memory problems as they get on in years, but the question really is which is the beginning of Alzheimer's and which is just aging?"

Reach the reporter at
Jim.Gintonio@Arizona
Republic.com
or (602) 444-7125.

INSIDE:

- Monthly Club Listings
- Local News

Section B

Around **WESTER** *Territory*

Thursday, December 3, 1998

Research Institute unveils newly completed third floor expansion

By Marie Scotti

To celebrate progress in research and the recent expansion of the Sun Health Research Institute, the community was invited to "Research Day" recently. A morning reception, which included music, took place prior to the ceremonies.

The Institute was unveiled the newly completed third floor of the research building which included the "LJ Roberts Alzheimer's Research Center," the "Ralph Roberts Center for Vision Science," the "Civin Laboratory for Pathology Studies," and the "Longtine Center for Molecular Biology and Genetics." Current research updates on Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's, vision and arthritis were given by SHRI staff scientists.

The guest speaker was the hon-

orable Brenda Burns, president of the Arizona State Senate. Burns supported the bill which established the Arizona Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research.

Leland W. Peterson, president of Sun Health, welcomed guests, volunteers, Sun Health Board members, donors, Research Institute scientists, physicians present and members of the legislature. He said, "Our programs in preventive care and health education are indicative of their early vision. So also is the Sun Health Research Institute which has tremendous potential for worldwide health benefits."

"Advances already recorded here at the world renowned Sun Health Research Institute are:

In 1992, our research team was the first to demonstrate that anti-

inflammatory drugs may slow or halt the progress of Alzheimer's disease in its early stages. Studied by John Hopkins researchers



Dr. Larry Sparks, principal scientist in Alzheimer's disease in the Institute's L.J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer Research is the first to discover a neuropathologic link between cardiovascular disease, increased free radical activity in the brain and Alzheimer's development. He is standing next to a container of brain tissues.

Photo, Marie Scotti

have confirmed the Institute's findings which are now widely accepted within the scientific community.

The Institute's brain bank continues to be one of the world's largest sources of brain tissue for use by research centers around the globe.

In 1996, the Institute's scientists published a potentially revolutionary new paper describing how brain cells from rapid autopsies of Alzheimer's and parkinson's patients can be kept alive or even grown in a test tube. Because these are living cells, scientists now are able to test hypotheses and drugs to determine directly how these cells respond to experimental manipulations, something that previously was not possible. Obviously, this

See RESEARCH, Page B2



Dr. Larry Sparks, principal scientist in Alzheimer's disease in the institute's L.J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer Research, explains inflammatory mechanisms that may damage the brain in Alzheimer's disease to Joe and Charlene Schoggen, SCW residents on tour of the laboratory. Photo, Marie Scotti



Sun Health Research Institute Scientists attended the "Research Day" ceremonies. Photo, Marie Scotti

~~SECRET~~

RESEARCH: Institute unveils expansion, from Page B1

ability holds tremendous potential for understanding these diseases and developing treatments."

Burns said, "The commitment to quality, integrity and respect of the elderly, make the Institute a valuable asset to the Senior Living Community in the West Valley and Greater Phoenix area. With one in 10 persons over the age 65 and half of everyone over age 85 afflicted with Alzheimer's there is a strong need for continued research to help find a cure or prevention of this disease. This is why we appropriated \$1.2 million this spring to establish the Arizona Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research.

"The Center is a combined effort that joins the resources of Sun Health, Good Samaritan Regional Health Center, the Mayo Clinic, Barrow's Neurological Institute and ASU and the U. of A. By combining our Arizona resources in brain imaging, computer science, behavioral neuroscience and Alzheimer's Disease research we can concentrate on

our efforts on treating and preventing this disorder."

Dr. Joseph Rogers, president and senior scientist, Sun Health Research Institute, said, "This day is our way of saying thanks to a lot of special people. First and foremost, the members of our community who've contributed every brick and board and every piece of equipment in the buildings and labs you're about to see. Second, we owe a real debt to our legislators this year, Senator Burns, Gov. Jan Hull, Bob Burns in the House, and many others as well. Third, I want to acknowledge my thanks to our staff, who transformed the buildings and equipment you've given them into research that will ultimately break the back of Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's, and arthritis, and vision impairment, and many other disorders that currently plague our nation.

Tours of the Research Institute lab followed the ceremony. Every member of the Research scientific staff was available to answer questions.

Sun Health scientist earns award for Alzheimer's work

Dr. Joseph Rogers, president and senior scientist of the Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City, has received a Zenith Award from the Alzheimer's Association.

The national award is the highest given by the association and provides up to \$300,000 funding for Dr. Rogers' research on inflammation and Alzheimer's disease.

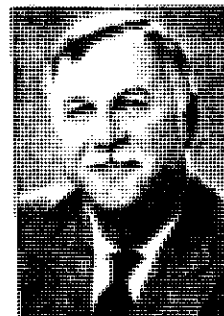
Others receiving this year's Zenith Award are Dr. Neil Kowall of Harvard

Medical School and Dr. Allen Roses, director of the National Alzheimer's Center at Duke University.

"This is wonderful recognition of the work the people in my laboratory have put in over the last 10 years," says Dr. Rogers.

"We're now in the home stretch of our research and the Zenith Award will be a big

See ■ ZENITH AWARD, Page 8



Dr. Joseph Rogers/ Director of the Sun Health Research Institute, has earned the Zenith Award.

■ ZENITH AWARD

From Page 1

help in keeping it going to the finish."

Dr. Rogers was one of the first to show that inflammatory mechanisms similar to those that damage joint tissue in arthritis also damage the brain in Alzheimer's disease.

He led clinical studies demonstrating a significant benefit of conventional anti-inflammatory drugs in delaying the onset and slowing the progression of Alzheimer's.

His results have been widely confirmed, including recently headlined research at Johns Hopkins in

the use of the anti-inflammatory drug ibuprofen for Alzheimer's patients.

Dr. Rogers noted he especially proud of the award because it came from the Alzheimer's Association, which he characterized as the world's leading organization in the fight against such disorders.

"They've been at the forefront on every issue, from raising public awareness about this terrible disease to establishing support groups for the families of Alzheimer's victims," he says.



Drs. Joseph Rogers (left) and Alex Roher of Sun Health Research Institute study brain tissue. James Garcia / Staff photographer

Money for brain power

Medical research seeking funds

By Mike Padgett
Staff writer

Joseph Rogers still has a few months before he celebrates his 10th anniversary in brain research in the Sun Cities, but he's already starting a wish list.

It's a short list.

Rogers, director and senior researcher

at Sun Health Research Institute, has one request — continued financial support from the community.

He hopes Sun Citians will be as generous this summer as they were 10 years ago when they began donating millions to pay for construction of the biogerontology research facility and medical library.

In the coming months, Rogers and his staff will start a campaign to raise \$5 million to finish the center's top

floor and part of another floor. It was partially complete when it opened in 1992 at 10515 W. Santa Fe Drive.

For the past four years, researchers have been using brain tissue from Sun City donors to study the causes of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, as well as arthritis.

Community donations totaling \$7 million paid for the center as well as the research, medical and office equipment

See RESEARCH, Page 6

for half of the building. Rogers said donors have placed another \$6.7 million in trust. Those funds will transfer to the center upon their deaths.

Rogers arrived in Sun City from the University of Massachusetts in 1986 and opened the facility's first office in a vacant corner shopping center. Today, because of their work, Rogers and his colleagues often are invited to national symposiums to present their gerontology research. They also send samples of brain tissue to about 200 researchers across the country.

Rogers said that while some experts believe 10 percent of those over 65 and 50 percent of those who reach 85 suffer from Alzheimer's, he suspects the prevalence is lower — 2 percent of people 65 and older, increasing to 10 percent for people 85 and older. Nationwide, about 4 million people have Alzheimer's disease.

Alex Roher, the center's associ-

ate director, said their work is aimed at finding the causes of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

That information will be used to design drugs for the diseases.

One of the center's staunchest supporters is Sen. Austin Turner, R-Waddell. Turner, who retired as Sun Health president in 1989, said Sun City was chosen as the home for the research center because the retirement community is seen as one of the nation's largest concentrations of elderly residents.

The area has an average age is 72 and 47,000 residents. Its neighbor, Sun City West, has about 26,000 residents. Another 17,000 residents are expected in Sun City Grand, where model homes will open this fall.

"This is where research needs to be done and should be done," Rogers said. "This is where the patients are, and that means this is where the need exists."

The retirees know that, too, and are giving more than money.

"They've shown themselves to be generous in the most personal way imaginable, which is to volunteer for research," the doctor said.

The only way researchers can study Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease "is by looking at brain tissue from the victims," Rogers said.

When the facility first opened its doors, Rogers went to civic and church groups to recruit residents who would donate brain tissue after their death for research. Nearly 800 people have agreed to become organ donors and the list continues to grow.

Agnes Poole, 79, is on that list. "They need brain tissue for their research and I just want to do what I can to help," she said.

Poole's husband, Edward, also a donor, died last year at the age of 80. She said he suffered from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

Rogers said healthy and diseased tissues are needed so researchers can draw comparisons and search for cures.

Researcher seeks cause

Arthritis linked to immune system

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Staff writer

There are 121 types of arthritis.

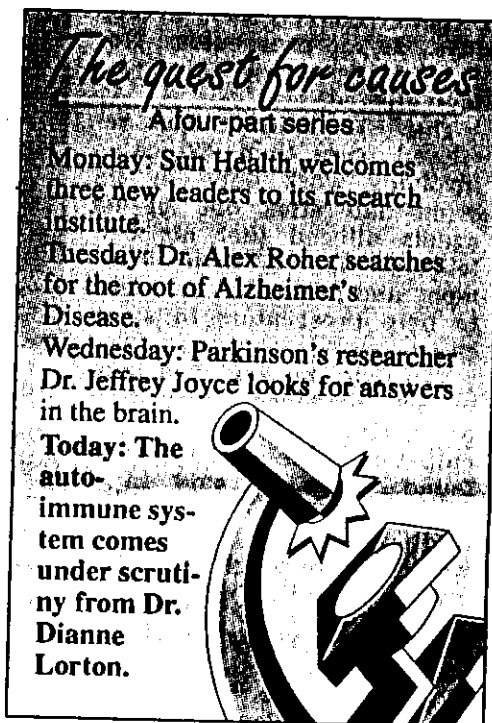
There are zero known causes for the disease characterized by chronic inflammation, pain, swelling and tenderness of the joints. Eventually there is a loss of joint function.

"Rheumatoid arthritis is thought to be an auto-immune disease associated with abnormal immune cell function," said Dianne Lorton, Ph.D., principal scientist at the Robert J. Hoover Arthritis Research Center in the Sun Health Research Institute. "If we look at the immune functions in patients with arthritis, they deviate from the norm."

The organs of the immune system — such as the spleen, thymus and lymph nodes — release immune cells into the blood which migrate to the joints and are deposited in the joint capsule. These immune cells produce auto-antibodies which attack normal components of the body and promote inflammation of the joint capsule synovium — a single cell layer that lines the inside of the joint capsule. The inflammation causes this cell layer to multiply into a multiple cell layer which eventually infiltrates the cartilage and bone and causes the destruction seen in arthritis patients.

As the bones and cartilage erode, the body tries to compensate by creating new bone. This is what causes the deformities in rheumatoid arthritis sufferers.

While there is no known cause for rheumatoid arthritis, researchers have found a correlation between stressful events in the lives of some patients and the onset and severity of rheumatoid arthritis. Grieving over the loss of a loved one or the trauma from a divorce has been associated with the onset of rheum-



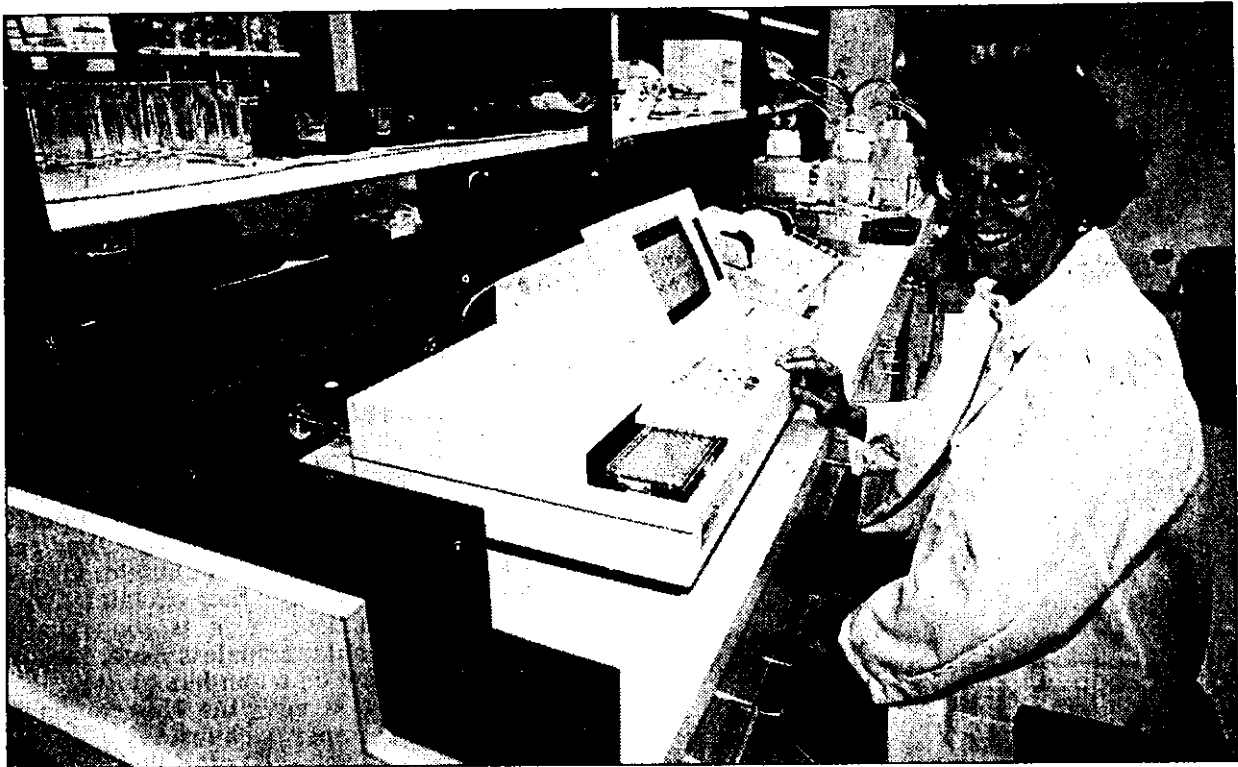
atoid arthritis, Lorton said.

"This suggests the nervous system has an impact on the disease," Lorton said. "I became interested in studying arthritis and other auto-immune diseases when it was discovered that the nervous system and the immune system could communicate back and forth. My research focuses on how the nervous system influences the immune system in rheumatoid arthritis."

Lorton said there are at least two neurotransmitters involved in regulating immune functions in rheumatoid arthritis. The first type of neurotransmitter is norepinephrine. It is part of the sympathetic nervous system and is released from nerve fibers when the body experiences stress, causing the heart to beat more quickly and telling the muscles to move if the person needs to flee.

This neurotransmitter also is involved in the maintenance of blood pressure and contributes to swelling

► See Substance sways, A5



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dianne Lorton, Ph.D., is the principal scientist at the Robert J. Hoover Arthritis Research Center in the Sun Health Research Institute. Her research focuses on how the nervous system influences the immune system in rheumatoid arthritis.

Substance sways cells

■ From A1

at sites of inflammation. The second neurotransmitter is called substance-P which is responsible for the body feeling pain.

When these neurotransmitters are released from nerves in immune organs they talk to cells of the immune system and by doing so, alter their function. They influence the ability of these immune cells to multiply, produce antibodies and to migrate to other sites in the body where there is inflammation and infection.

"I've found that by blocking the function of norepinephrine in the immune organs causes a more severe arthritis," Lorton said. "This suggests that norepinephrine in the immune organs is playing a beneficial role in preventing the harmful effects of arthritis. Conversely, by blocking the function of substance-P in immune organs results in less severe arthritis.

"This suggests that substance-P promotes the devastating inflammatory process of arthritis. My ultimate goal is to determine any possible use of drugs to manipulate the function of these neurotransmitters in the immune

organs. By doing this, we might be able to alter the disease progression and in the long run, develop therapeutic approaches for the intervention of auto-immune diseases."

While achieving such a goal might bring scientific kudos to Lorton, it will directly impact the lives of arthritis sufferers such as Sun City West resident Margaret Hollar. Hollar watched her grandmother suffer from arthritis. She watched her mother suffer from arthritis. Now she suffers from five or six forms of arthritis.

Hollar lives her life in limbo because of the disease. Planning ahead gets a little tricky because she never knows when she will have a severe flare-up. Some days she spends her time with her leg elevated to alleviate the pain and swelling in her knee caused by arthritis.

"My husband and I were flying to Connecticut to see our daughter and it was supposed to be a direct flight," she said. "We ended up having to stop in Dallas-Fort Worth because there was something wrong with the plane. When they transferred us, we had to do quite a bit of

walking. By the time we got there, my knee was swollen to twice its normal size."

While Lorton's line of investigation most likely won't lead to a cure, it may alleviate much of the symptomology, she said. Current treatments may produce severe side effects and often are short-lived.

"There are many safe and effective drugs currently available and in use for other disorders which alter the function of norepinephrine," she said. "We may be able to combine some of these drugs with ones currently in use for treatment of arthritis to decrease the symptoms and the side-effects. I think someday they'll find a cure, but the biggest roadblock is not knowing the cause of rheumatoid arthritis."

Hollar would give just about anything for some relief from the debilitating pain.

"I have to live every day with pain," she said. "Every day I have to live with Darvocet (a narcotic). I've gotten to the point where I only take half a Darvocet in the mornings. I don't like to take any more than I have to because over time, it's not good for the body."

10

Searching for cures

Researcher studies Parkinson's disease

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Jean Hack noticed her left foot dragged as she walked. Her hand shook horribly as she wrote, causing her script to be almost illegible.

Filled with concern, she and her husband Ted sought a medical opinion. The doctor ordered a brain scan.

On Dec. 4 — the night of their wedding anniversary — the doctor dropped the bomb:

Jean had Parkinson's disease.

"Parkinson's is not a fatal disease," she said. "You end up dying of something else, but Parkinson's is the underlying cause. What happens is your body slows down until you can't move at all.

"I take medicine that does help. It gives me some oomph. So far I'm still able to get up and around. I do what I can when I can, and when I can't, I don't."

While medication may give the Sun City resident temporary help, Parkinson's has no cure. But Jeffrey Joyce, Ph.D., keeps the hope alive that scientists like himself will find something to reverse the debilitating disease.

Joyce just joined the Sun Health Research Institute to head up the William T. Christopher Parkinson's Disease Research Center. He comes to Sun City from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia.

Parkinson's isn't a new phenomenon, Joyce said. Palsy-type illnesses have been observed as early as the 15th century. However, it wasn't until 1817 that Dr. James Parkinson wrote his "Essay on the Shaking Palsy." He was the first physician to



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dr. Jeffrey Joyce tackles boxes and boxes of supplies for his new laboratory in the Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City. Joyce researches Parkinson's disease.

provide a comprehensive analysis of the disease that today bears his name.

The disease robs its victims of their ability to move. It causes tremors, rigidity in movement and finally bradykinesia — the inability to move.

In the early 1960s, scientists discovered a neurotransmitter called dopamine that acts as the signal for the body's movement.

Joyce likens the process to that of a telephone call. To communicate with a friend, you pick up your home telephone, the signal travels from your mouthpiece, across the telephone lines to the receiver on your friend's telephone.

In the brain, your home telephone is the substantia nigra, a small group of cells in the brain stem, Joyce said. The signal being sent is the dopamine. The telephone wires are nerve cells and the receiver is re-

► See Scientist researches, A5

The quest for causes

A four-part series

Monday: Sun Health welcomes three new leaders to its research institute.

Tuesday: Dr. Alex Roher searches for the root of Alzheimer's Disease.

Today: Parkinson's researcher Dr. Jeffrey Joyce looks for answers in the brain.

Thursday:

The auto-immune system comes under scrutiny from Dr. Dianne Lorton.



Scientist researches Parkinson's mystery

■ From A1

ceptor sites in the basal ganglia.

What happens in Parkinson's patients is the home telephone in the brain is out of order, and they can't make any calls. There is a breakdown in the substantia nigra and the signal — the dopamine — can no longer travel to the receiver. Once this happens, the body loses its ability to move.

"We have known for over 30 years that dopamine and the cells that produce it contribute to Parkinson's disease," Joyce said. "Ever since I was a graduate student, I've studied everything about dopamine and how it reacts in the brain."

Understanding this connection led to the development of treatments for the disease, but no cure. One of the most popular treatments is dopamine replacement with a synthetic form of the neurotransmitter called L-Dopa.

"It will work for a while, but eventually it no longer works," Joyce said. "There is limited use because of two kinds of side effects. One is uncontrollable movement as the drug begins to work, and the other one is the confusion and hallucinations caused by the drugs."

One of the side effects is the dramatic on-and-off results of the drug. In some cases, Parkinson's patients will wake up in the mornings unable to move at all.

A dose of L-Dopa gradually brings back the patient's ability to move, and they are fairly ambulatory for a period of time. However, when the drug wears off, it does so quickly, leaving the patient virtually motionless again.

While Parkinson's disease isn't rampant among the elderly population — experts estimate 1.5 million — scientists have made another disturbing discovery. Nearly 40 percent of all Alzheimer's patients display Parkinson's-like

symptoms. They have the rigidity and the bradykinesia, but not the tremors.

"Many people think, 'Oh that poor person. They have both Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.' They look at it like a double hit," Joyce said.

"But we know now in the vast majority of cases that is not true. There is a nerve degeneration process underlying that. In many of these cases, the cells are still there and are alive, but they're shutting off parts of their own machinery for making things, thus, they are in a sense doing their job poorly or not at all. What we want to know is, can we turn them back on?"

Joyce's mission extends beyond the mere scientific. He wants to apply what he learns in his laboratory to helping the patients.

"I'd like to be able to extend real life for them," he said. "And we're almost there. We still have a lot of work to do, but we're not starting at the beginning anymore."

Researcher battles memory thief

Alzheimer's steals patients' pasts

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Searching out Alex Roher, M.D., Ph.D., you can find him in his laboratory poring through books, peering at brain sections through a microscope or separating samples in his centrifuge.

But don't for one minute think this scientist divorces himself from the human tragedy of Alzheimer's disease — the malady he has devoted his life to researching.

"We are here because of our memory," he said. "We are here because we can remember the past and

can live for the future.

"As humans we are continuously putting experiences into our memory and extracting them. That's what makes us human. If that fails, it's the most pathetic and tragic thing a human being can suffer.

"You know we spend our whole lives working, being good citizens, raising children and saving our money for the future. We reach 65 and want to enjoy the fruits of our labor surrounded by the ones we love.

"Suddenly, the elderly population is faced with this wild animal hiding just behind the bushes, waiting to jump on them and rob them of their memory — rob them of their humanity."

And everywhere Roher goes, he meets people affected by Alz-

heimer's. Even general chatter on an airplane leads to a discussion of the disease.

"Very rarely do I meet someone who doesn't know someone who has been touched by Alzheimer's," he said. "They all say my neighbor, or cousin, or auntie or even mother has Alzheimer's. Four million Americans are suffering from this disease. It's the fourth-leading cause of death in America."

And soon it will replace strokes as the third-leading cause, Roher projects. With the rapid aging of the American population, that number will double by 2040.

It's with this urgency that Roher comes to the Sun Health Research Institute from Wayne State University in Detroit to stalk the proteins which cause the brain to degenerate.

What does Roher know at this time?

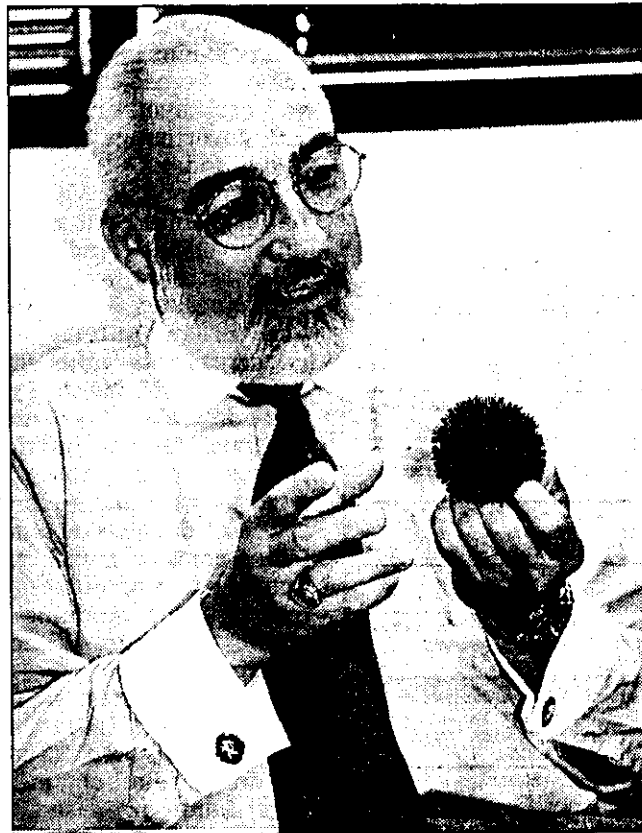
He knows a normal brain weighs an average of three pounds. The brain of an Alzheimer's patient degenerates and loses nearly one-third of its size.

He knows the degeneration is caused in part by filaments in the brain. These filaments are formed by an extra-cellular protein known as beta amyloid. While researchers don't know the specific role beta amyloid plays in the functioning of the brain, they do know it normally shows up in very small quantities.

This isn't true in the case of the Alzheimer's patient. Excessive amounts of beta amyloid are present, which in turn produce these filaments which are toxic to the brain.

Roher, who received his medical

► See Disease takes, A3



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dr. Alex Roher likens a bundle of protein filaments in the brains of Alzheimer's patients to a fuzzy ball.

Disease takes many forms

■ From A1

degree from the National University of Mexico and his doctorate in biochemistry from Cambridge, said the brain is a very clever organ. It recognizes the filaments as an extraneous material and tries to eliminate them from the brain using its housekeeping cells, called microglial cells. The filaments cause inflammation in the brain and degeneration of healthy nerve cells.

"It's like you're having a lovely party to celebrate an anniversary or birthday," he said. "Suddenly, intruders come into the party. They use bad language and don't look right. The gentlemen guests react by trying to push the intruders away first with words and then by force. Finally, they call the police to remove these unwanted interlopers.

"The police bring an arsenal of weapons with them and begin shooting into the party to remove the intruders. But these undesirables can't be removed and unfortunately several of your friends and family members are killed by friendly fire.

"This is what happens in the brain of an Alzheimer's patient. The microglial cells represent the police of the brain. They attack the filaments and in the ensuing battle, healthy cells in the vicinity are destroyed by friendly fire. Once the filaments are made, they can't be removed."

Finding out why these filaments are produced in the first place is a great challenge for the scientist. Researchers recently have found that there is a genetic mutation which is passed on through families. However, familial cases make up only about 10 percent of the Alzheimer's population, Roher said.

What scientists have found is that Alzheimer's does not come in just one type. The most common type is called sporadic Alzheimer's disease. There is no previous family history of Alzheimer's and none which follows. It simply occurs. These sporadic cases make up 90 percent of the Alzheimer's population.

"In this flurry of discovery, it's not far-fetched to think that we won't discover more and more forms of Alzheimer's," he said. "We have to come to view Alzheimer's as a heterogenous group of diseases which share in common the clinical symptoms of dementia and other pathological changes in the brain, but which have different origins."

While a cure or vaccine would thrill Roher, he said he has to maintain realistic expectations.

"As a physician, I know there is nothing better than preventative medicine," he said. "Of course totally eradicating the disease is the ultimate goal, but on a more realistic level, we'd like to at least slow down the progression of the disease. We'd like to hold the disease at its earliest stages."

Sun Health boosts staff

Institute draws top researchers

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Staff writer

"Alzheimer's is robbing my wife of her memory. Why is this happening to her?"

"Parkinson's is robbing my father of his movement. Why is this happening to him?"

"Arthritis is robbing me of my ability to knit. Why is this happening to me?"

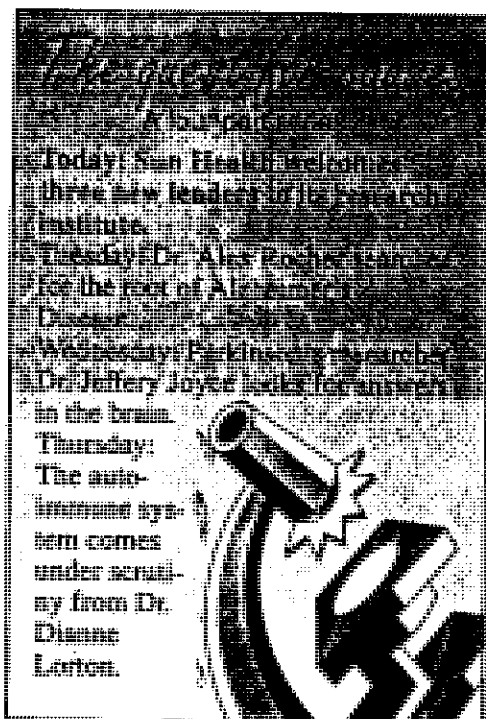
"Why" is the reason three of the nation's top researchers in these fields have come to the Sun Health Research Institute. Their mission is to discover why proteins run askew in the brains of Alzheimer's patients, to discover why some of the cells in the brain stem die off in Parkinson's patients and to discover why the immune system breaks down and causes arthritis.

Alex Roher, M.D., Ph.D., heads up the Robert S. Haldeman Laboratory for Alzheimer's Research; Jeffrey Joyce, Ph.D., leads the efforts in the William T. Christopher Parkinson's Disease Research Center and Dianne Lortzen, Ph.D., is the director of the Robert J. Hoover Arthritis Research Center.

All three believe if they can find out why, they can find a way to stop, if not the diseases themselves, at least the progression of the maladies afflicting the elderly. And the number of afflictions facing the elderly grows as the number of older Americans grows.

"We have better hygiene and have made quantitative leaps in the medical field which has permitted us to live longer," said Roher. "In 1900, the average life expectancy was 50 years. You can see how much we have advanced because now the life expectancy is 78 years.

"They didn't used to have vac-



cines. Child mortality ran rampant. My mother told me there were 13 children born to her parents. Only four survived to adulthood. Because we are living longer and longer, diseases of the elderly are going to be more prevalent. Most people never lived long enough to have a disease of the elderly."

While none of these diseases is fatal in itself, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's do lead to other illnesses which can result in death, Joyce said.

"Most often they die of pneumonia," he said. "Pneumonia develops because they are lying down, and they're lying down because they can't move any more. The death certificate will read pneumonia with a history of Parkinson's."

All three research scientists expressed their pleasure at working in a community that is willing to support their studies through financial assistance as well as donating brains for research. While the scientists can

► See Institute seeks, A5

Institute seeks support

■ From A1

use any financial contributions and brains from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's patients, they also need brain donations from people who don't suffer from any type of brain disease.

"We need normal brains too because we need to be able to compare the good vs. the bad," Roher said.

The excitement of having the three scientists at the institute goes both ways. Dr. Joseph Rogers, executive director of the research institute, said he is thrilled with the additional faculty.

"They show that this institution can attract top scientists from all over the country," he said. "They are all extremely well-known in their fields and can only augment the tremendous strides we have made already."

Rogers said he hopes this is just the first of many expansions to serve the needs of the Sun Cities population.

"Our direction is dictated by the needs of the community and the generosity of the community," he said. "I would very much like to see a neuropathology lab established here which would serve all the different age-related brain research that we do. I'd also like to see other labs established for other age-related disorders like age-related cancers such as prostate, breast and uterine cancers. I'd like to see a diabetes lab, a



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Researchers joining the staff of Sun Health Institute are from left, Dr. Dianne Lorton, Dr. Alex Roher and Dr. Jeffrey Joyce.

lab for vision and hearing disorders or maybe a lab to study cardiovascular disease.

"They will come as the

community realizes how much we can do and comes forth and supports our strides in these new areas."

Local institute seeks funding to continue Alzheimer's tests

By **KATHLEEN WINSTEAD**
Sun Cities Independent

Sun Cities residents with Alzheimer's disease might one day benefit from research being conducted by scientists at the Sun Health Research Institute.

A cure for the illness, however, may never be found unless Sun Health officials obtain funding to continue studies of the effect certain drugs have on the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

About 3-4 percent of Sun Cities residents suffer from Alzheimer's disease, a degenerative brain disorder.

In a trial conducted last year, researchers at the institute discovered the anti-inflammatory drug indomethacin, commonly prescribed for arthritis patients, was found to slow and, in some cases, halt the advance of Alzheimer's.

For a decade, researchers speculated that a process similar to the inflammation occurring in a wound or arthritic joint also occurs in an Alzheimer's patient's brain.

Results of last year's study, conducted by researchers at Sun Health and the University of British Columbia Medical School, were published in the medical journal *Neurology*.

According to Joseph Rogers, Ph.D., director of the Sun Health Research Institute, trial experiments began with a group of 44 people diagnosed with mild to moderate cases of Alzheimer's and ended with 28 people, a "very small trial by today's standards."

Of the 28 people participating in the trial, half were given a placebo and half received indomethacin. Those receiving the placebo experienced a deterioration of almost 10 percent on memory and other mental-status tests. The indomethacin patients, however, appeared to hold their ground and even to show a slight improvement, Dr. Rogers

says.

A second clinical trial began six months ago and is expected to continue four or five months longer because volunteers joined the trial at staggered times.

The second trial involves 50 patients, about one-third of whom are receiving indomethacin, one-third who are receiving a placebo and one-third who are receiving Dapsone. Dapsone is another anti-inflammatory drug used for rheumatoid arthritis which doesn't cause stomach problems associated with the use of indomethacin, Dr. Rogers says. Stomach problems in those taking indomethacin range from heartburn to ulcers.

Due to a lack of funding, however, the trial could involve no more than 50 patients, Dr. Rogers says.

"Once we get over 50 patients,

without funding we can't handle it. We've halted the trial at a number we feel we can manage. We will complete the trial that we have (now) and learn from that," Dr. Rogers says.

Dr. Rogers and his colleagues, doctors Paul Butzine, Michael Cofield, Ralph Pagano, Louis Kirby, and Stephen Hempelman, hope within the next couple of months to organize a "much more complete trial and to do it with investigators around the world."

"We are looking at funding from some of the drug companies to do another trial in the next year."

Sun Health researchers also will look into the possibility of obtaining government funding.

The type of trial he envisions would most likely cost about \$1,500 per patient.



Rick D'Elia/Daily News-Sun

Sun Health Research Institute's Dr. Joseph Rogers accepts Western Maricopa Coalition award.

Researchers earn laurels

Westmarc salutes West Side winners

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

GLENDALE — The Western Maricopa Coalition has arrived as a Valley force, supporters say.

But Westmarc's top award winner at Thursday night's inaugural "Best of the West" dinner is arriving as a world force.

Sun City's Sun Health Research Institute and its director, Dr. Joseph Rogers, walked off with the top award among the 21 handed out before a capacity audience of 510 representing 13 Western Maricopa County communities at Arizona State University West.

"We can clearly see now what's great about Western Maricopa County," said keynote speaker Joe Bacchus, First Interstate Bank's Northwest Arizona Area president. "We have stepped up and we have

arrived. We're here."

The winners were selected for their outstanding contributions to the image, lifestyle and economic development of west Maricopa County.

Awards were given in two main categories and five sub-categories — "Best of the West" and the humanities. Sub-categories were growth, recreation, education, arts and transportation (GREAT).

"In establishing the Chairman's Award, the committee (of five) was seeking an entry that was exemplary and extraordinary in its achievements in enhancing the image, lifestyle, welfare and economic development of west Maricopa County," said master of ceremonies Peter Spaw, a Litchfield Park attorney.

"There were so many of the 57 entries that shined as potential winners," he said. "But clearly, one shined brightest ... because its accomplishments touch not only the lives of west Maricopa County resi-

dents, but also significantly contribute to bettering the lives of people the world over."

Sun Health Research Institute at 13220 N. 103rd Ave. and its staff of 14 scientists and researchers is seeking a cure for Alzheimer's and other age-related diseases.

"I think back East where I just came from, they're typically surprised when they see world class research coming from some little town they've never heard of," Rogers said after the dinner. "People back East think good research only comes from the hallowed halls of Harvard or the ivy walls of Johns Hopkins.

"I think our institute shows what a community can do when it pulls together," Rogers said. "We can do something that is world class, that gets telephone calls from Tokyo and Chile researchers. I believe our research institute is going to be well known throughout the world in a very short time.

See Surprise wins, A6

Surprise wins with community effort

—From A1

"It's already beginning to be in the scientific world," he said. "But I really believe that in 10 years people will think of us as the Mayo Clinic of geriatrics — a place where if you have an age-related problem you want to go to look for research and treatment."

Rogers noted the institute has come a long way in seven years, when it started in a small, abandoned office building with a handful of staff. "This just shows what can be done when a community puts its mind to it as they have done."

Rogers delivered his acceptance speech six hours after lecturing at the New York Academy of Sciences.

In his speech, Rogers said whatever has been accomplished in finding a cure for Alzheimer's (and much progress has been made), "is a direct product of the West Valley Community's generosity."

"It just floors us that people in the Sun Cities would be recognized by a multi-city group like Westmarc," said Len Gibb, Sun Health director of planned giving. "For many years we were kind of separated and isolated. This kind of makes us feel a part of the West Valley.

"Austin Turner (former Sun

Health president and current District 15 state senator) should get credit because it was under his reign that the institute started," Gibb said.

The city of Surprise won two first-place awards. The city won in the humanity recreation category with its Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention Summer Youth Program and its Westside Food Bank won in the humanity growth category for its many contributions in feeding the West Valley's hungry.

"It means that all of our work and frustrations came to some bearing and shows that we can come back next summer and do it again," said Joan Shafer, Surprise vice mayor and youth program coordinator Joan Shafer.

"The whole city worked for it. There wasn't a person at the Surprise Community Center who didn't contribute something.

"I'm just pleased that a small city was able to get this award," Shafer said. "But our program did a lot of good and helped a lot of kids. They are already asking if we are going to have it next year."

A daily average of more than 60 children up to age 15 were involved in crafts and recreation programs at the Community Center.

Resident lends knowledge, skill to find cure for dreaded disease

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

When Sun City resident W. Harold Civin entered the medical field, no one had heard of Alzheimer's disease.

Today, as a volunteer at the Institute for Biogerontology Research next to Boswell Hospital, he is involved in work that one day may lead to therapy for or prevention of one of the most debilitating diseases to strike senior citizens.

As a pathologist, Dr. Civin worked in Hawaii, Ohio and Michigan before he retired and moved to Sun City. He now devotes three hours a day, five days a week toward examining brain tissue under a microscope for signs of the memory-impairing disease.

A board certified pathologist is necessary to correctly diagnose Alzheimer's disease in the human brain and ensure the tissue is safe for research, says Dr. Joseph Rogers, institute director.

"He makes a tremendous contribution. Without him we couldn't have a brain bank and

Pathologist
W. Harold
Civin
volunteers his
time at the
Institute for
Biogerontology
Research in an
effort to find a
cure for
Alzheimer's.



without a brain bank there'd be no institute. Rats, cats and dogs don't get Alzheimer's so the only way to study it is to look at human brain tissue."

Dr. Civin is the longest-serving of 16 volunteers who assist 15 staff members at the 6-year-old research institute. It consists of the now unmanned Hoover Arthritis Center, the partially manned Christopher Center for Parkinson's Research and the fully operational Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research. In honor of Dr. Civin's contribution, the pathology center has been named for him.

Dr. Civin became interested in

the institute in 1987 after hearing a lecture on the institute by Dr. Rogers. Although he had done volunteer work before in the community, it was sporadic.

"Here was a field I could do a lot of work in and there was continuity," he says.

He even continues his volunteer work while away from the community. Dr. Civin has a microscope at his second home in Prescott so he can continue his research while out of town.

In addition to the knowledge Dr. Civin lends the institute, Dr. Rogers says the pathologist is a pleasure to work with.

"He's not just a nice person but an extra nice person and he has an active and inquisitive mind."

Search for cures: Research center relies on community aid to battle illness

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Residents of the Sun Cities are donating time, money and talents — and even their brains — to help solve medical problems that plague the elderly.

The Sun Health Institute for Biogerontology Research Center in Sun City would not exist today without the generosity of area citizens, said Joseph Rogers, the institute's director and senior research scientist.

"I started the research institute in a small office in 1986 and today we have this \$5 million facility which was paid for with community donations," Rogers said. "There was no tax money or hospital money involved in building the buildings."

The 36,000-square-foot institute, adjacent to Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital near 105th Avenue and Thunderbird Boulevard, is the site of local research into the causes of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, geriatric cancers and other age-related disorders.

Much of the current focus among the

"Rats and cats and dogs don't get Alzheimer's, people do. Our brain bank has been so successful that we are shipping brains to research institutes all over the world."

Joseph Rogers

Director
Sun Health Institute
for Biogerontology Research Center

institute's staff of 15 is on the development of a therapy for Alzheimer's disease, a progressive brain disorder.

"Sometimes people in the Sun Cities are characterized as being self-centered, but the donations to the research institute demonstrate how they are helping future generations," said Pamela Meyerhoffer of the nonprofit Sun Health Foundation, which raised the money from the community for the research center.

Two Sun City couples donated about half the money needed for the construction. Bob and Ruth Hoover contributed

more than \$1.5 million, and Bob and Cleo Roberts gave more than \$1 million.

But many Sun Citians and other area residents also donated of themselves by allowing their brain tissue to be used in research by the institute after their death.

Brains that are not afflicted by Alzheimer's or Parkinson's are needed as well to let researchers make comparisons.

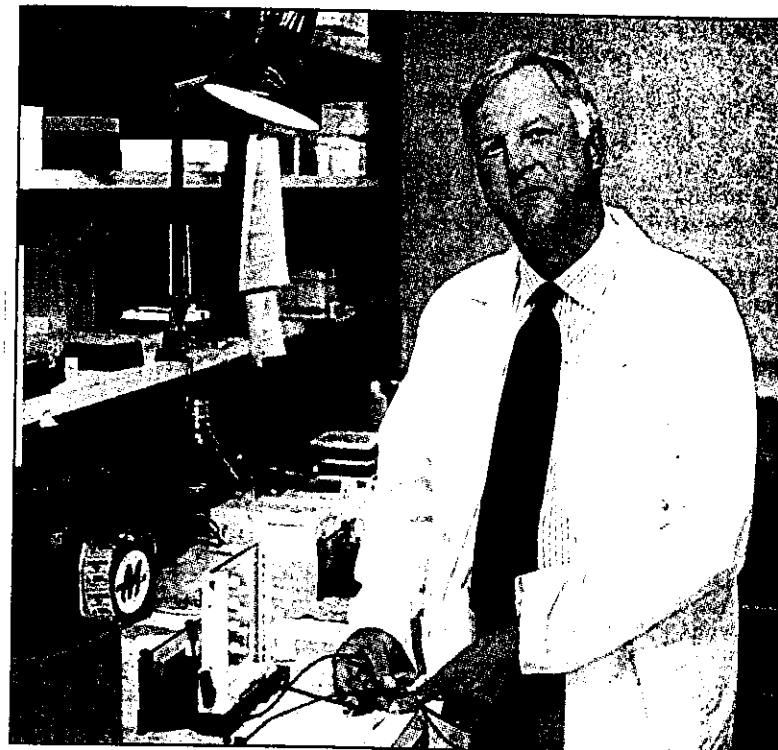
"Rats and cats and dogs don't get Alzheimer's, people do," said Rogers, who has a doctorate in neurobiology and has been researching Alzheimer's for about a decade.

"Our brain bank has been so successful that we are shipping brains to research institutes all over the world," Rogers said.

Rogers said a clinical trial involving Alzheimer's research recently was completed and results will be released in August.

The institute last month completed its two-story library and conference center. A new courtyard connects the library with the three-story institute building, which includes laboratories.

See BRAIN, Page 5



Russell Gates / Staff photographer

"We have this \$5 million facility which was paid for with community donations," says Joseph Rogers, director of the Sun Health Institute for Biogerontology Research Center.



Russell Gates / Staff photographer
Volunteers are key to the success of the center, which was built without any tax money. Above, Mary Michaels of Sun City catalogs scientific reports in the library.

Researcher seeks Parkinson's cure

'Like science fiction' but could help many

By Lori Baker
 Staff writer

SUN CITY — Joseph Rogers is trying to trick brain cells from recently deceased adults into believing they are from fetuses.

Rogers, director of the Sun Health Institute for Biogerontology Research Center in Sun City, is searching for a cure for Parkinson's disease, a degenerative brain disorder that destroys the nerve centers in the brain that control body movement.

The disease afflicts about 1 million people in the United States, among them boxing legend Muhammad Ali and retired Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz.

Although there have been some documented cases in which human fetal tissue transplanted into the brain has helped people afflicted with Parkinson's, Rogers said it's a felony in Arizona to use fetal tissue in medical research.

President Clinton in January lifted a moratorium on federal spending for fetal tissue research.

"It's a really tough issue because people feel strongly about both sides," Rogers said. "It would move medical research forward in Arizona if fetal tissue could be used."

Rogers is trying to find a cure for Parkinson's using brain tissue from deceased adults. A Sun City woman provided money for that research.

"It is like science fiction at this

point, but we believe the studies are worth pursuing," Rogers said.

In Parkinson's, the brain has ceased to produce a chemical substance known as dopamine that helps direct voluntary movement in the body.

The cells that generate that substance are still growing in fetal tissue, however. Researchers believe that when transplanted into the brain of a Parkinson's patient, they can help stimulate the production of dopamine.

Rogers said synthetic dopamine helps, but it goes to all parts of the brain not just to where it is needed.

One experiment Rogers is conducting involves growing the cells that produce dopamine in a test tube by taking live cells from recently deceased patients.

"Once that is accomplished, we then need to trick the cells into thinking they're still young, still in the fetal stage, so they will multiply," Rogers said.

When there are enough cells, Rogers said researchers will have to trick the cells again into thinking they're old so they will stop dividing and producing dopamine. Otherwise, the transplanted cells would perform like a tumor — a group of cells that reproduce uncontrollably and push normal tissue out of the way.

"The . . . cells we can keep alive in a test tube may give us a window into the brain that we've never had before, and a way to study what happens to these cells in Parkinson's disease," Rogers said.

BRAIN

From Page 1

The library is being assembled by volunteers like Sun City resident John Davee.

Davee oversees about 10 volunteers who are setting up the library. One of their projects is to catalog into a computer information on about 5,000 reprints of articles from medical journals.

Other volunteers greet visitors and do clerical work. A retired engineer tests equipment. A retired chemist and a retired pathologist help in the laboratory.

The institute eventually will have more buildings constructed on the campus, but that is several years away, Rogers said.

In the interim, Rogers' main concern is attracting top-notch scientists.

"The institute is like my field of dreams. Now that it's been built, I'm waiting for the scientists to

come," Rogers said. "I hope they recognize the tremendous opportunity for doing the research on the aging."

Sun City is an ideal location for the institute, Rogers said, because of the concentrated geriatric population. The two Sun Cities have a combined population of about 60,000 and more retirement communities nearby are under construction or planned.

Rogers uses various grants to operate the research institute. Contributors include the National Institutes of Health. But Rogers hopes for increased donations from the community so that higher salaries could be offered to scientists.

Donations may be made by calling the Sun Health Foundation at 876-5330.

Library assists researchers

Building complements institute

Daily News-Sun staff

In the bright rays of the setting sun, the Sun Health Research Institute Tuesday dedicated a new library, which officials said will help the institute cast rays of hope in the battle against aging-related diseases.

The Robert J. Hoover Administration and Library Building, 13220 N. 105th Ave., is adjacent to the institute's main building, which was dedicated a year ago.

The library is named after Hoover, who along with wife Ruth, were the primary benefactors for the building. The Hoovers are Sun City residents.

The library's construction was funded entirely through donations. It is part of a \$4 million project that includes the research institute and connecting plaza.

The library will house professional journals, periodicals, books and scientific articles for the institute's research staff.

Tuesday's ceremonies, which included tours of the institute and library, laboratory demonstrations, refreshments and a string quartet, were a celebration of the generosity that made the building possible.

Several Sun Health officials spoke briefly in an afternoon ceremony in the L.J. "Bob"

Roberts Recognition Plaza, where plaques honor dozens of donors. Plaques bearing more names have been placed inside the new building.

Rae McMillan, president of the Sun Health Foundation board of trustees, thanked donors for a "tradition of giving."

McMillan said the library's stained-glass window, a depiction of a sunburst, is an appropriate symbol.

Institute researchers, she said, "are casting new light on the causes, therapies and cures for the diseases of aging."

Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the institute, told the assembled donors their gifts would make a difference in the institute's work.

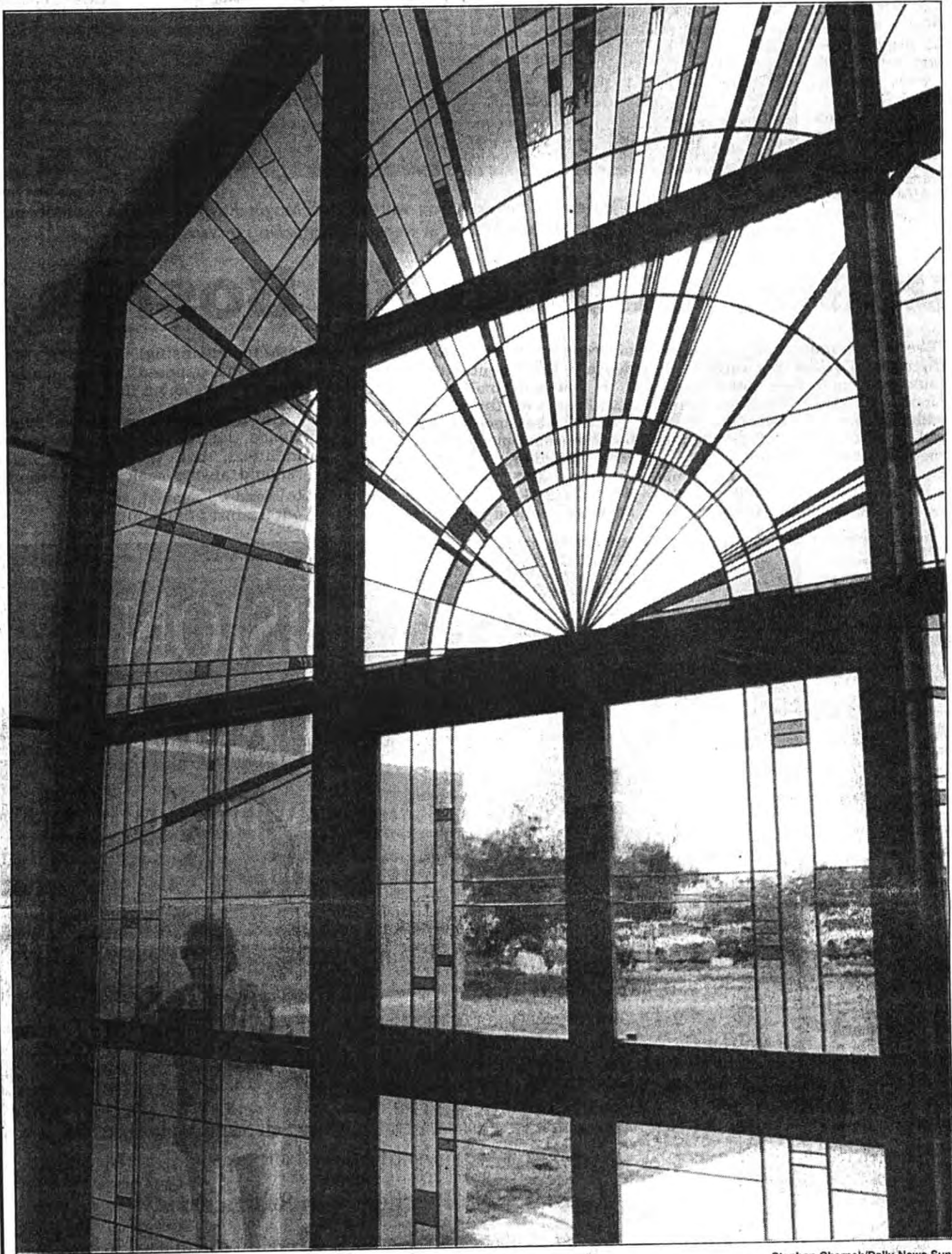
"This beautiful building is the beginning of a very bright light indeed," said Rogers, who added that a study at the institute, to be published in a scientific journal in July, had found a drug that might halt the progress of Alzheimer's disease.

The library will enable institute scientists to keep up with the latest research and build on the work of others, he said.

Rogers said state and federal grants and the generosity of donors would soon fill the library's bare shelves.

10

sun



Stephen Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Mary Latta peeks through a window at the entrance to the new Robert J. Hoover administration building and library at the Sun Health Research Institute.

Visitors were given tours of the institute and library and witnessed laboratory demonstrations during Tuesday's library dedication. Story A3.

SC institute to study 120 Alzheimer's patients

By BRITT KENNERLY
Daily News-Sun staff

Based on the success of a 1992 clinical study of Alzheimer's patients, Sun Health Research Institute of Sun City will soon launch a second, more involved study.

The study, which will include 120 people who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, has been approved by the Walter O. Boswell Institutional Review Board and will run for six months after its inception.

"We have found that indeed, inflammation does go on in the brain of an Alzheimer's patient," said Dr. Joseph Rogers, institute director. "We used an anti-inflammatory drug

'With the original drug, about 20 percent of the patients developed stomach problems. The two drugs we'll introduce this year don't have that side effect.'

**Dr. Joseph Rogers
Sun Health Research Institute**

in the first study and the results were pretty striking. Now we want to do a much more conclusive test, incorporate more patients. We want to try the same anti-inflammatory drug we used in the first test as well as two others we believe may be even better."

The second study will be a double blind, placebo-controlled study,

Rogers said.

Simply put, that means neither the patients participating nor the evaluators of the patients' progress will know whether the patient was using one of three anti-inflammatory drugs or placebos until the tests are completed.

Patients using placebos will be told they were taking the sugar pills at

the test's conclusion, Rogers said.

The drugs that will be used, Rogers said, are the same used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

"They have been around for decades and are being used with relative safety," he said. "They are not new or experimental drugs."

The two drugs to be introduced in the new study may be better than the first in two senses, he said.

"With the original drug, about 20 percent of the patients developed stomach problems," he said. "The two drugs we'll introduce this year don't have that side effect. Also, they have other properties we believe may be helpful in treating Alzheimer's and dementia patients."

Although Rogers doesn't like giving one group of Alzheimer's patients placebos, it's a necessity, he said.

"Ethically, it's painful for me, and it's hard for the patient," he said. "I don't like it that somebody won't be getting all the help they could be getting. But it's the only way to prove a drug's effectiveness, and it's a common practice in such studies."

The patients will be seen by one of three doctors to confirm the diagnosis of probable Alzheimer's disease before they are included.

Candidates also will take a test called a mini-mental status exam, MMSE, to assess their memory, and should have a score of 16 to 26 on

See Local researchers, A5

Local researchers to test anti-inflammatory drugs

—From A1
the test.

"We want people who can carry on a fairly normal conversation some of the time, which would fall into that 16-26 range," Rogers said. "We would like to take more severely impaired people, but at this time, we can't.

"In this study, we hope to show the progress of the disease halted, and if a patient is severely impaired, that may not be ground they'd want to hold. With a 16-26 score on the test, that's good ground to hold."

Finally, Rogers said, potential participants should not have other serious medical problems, such as a stroke, that might be exacerbated by the drugs being used in the test.

Rogers expects to interview about 180 patients to narrow the field down to 120 participants, he said.

Caregivers, friends or families of potential candidates may call 876-5466 and ask for information on the Alzheimer's study. A staff member or Rogers will provide a



Dr. Joseph Rogers

synopsis of the study, he said.

"The tests will start as soon as possible after a person has been accepted," he said. "The candidates don't have to live in the Greater Phoenix area, provided we have assurances that they will be available for evaluation at one week, one month, three months and six months. We need to see them that often."

Sun Health teams up with ASU West

By IAN MITCHELL

Daily News-Sun staff

The scientists at Sun Health Research Institute are going back to school — as biology professors at Arizona State University West. University and institute officials have scheduled a briefing this afternoon at ASU West to discuss their agreement, which will begin with the fall semester pending approval of the state board of regents.

"We're going to teach half of their life sciences program," said Joseph Rogers, director and senior research scientist at the institute, adjacent to Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital in Sun City.

"It seemed just a natural fit. We have some widely recognized scientists in the field of biology and they have a need," Rogers said.

Daye Schwalm, associate provost for academic programs at ASU West, said institute scientists will probably be teaching six pre-professional biology courses at the west Phoenix campus in the first year of the agreement.

See Scientists join, A5

Scientists join college faculty

—From A1

"I think we have people who are really engaged in some cutting-edge research in the private sector becoming involved in the university," Schwalm said.

Most students in ASU's new pre-professional biology program will be interested in becoming doctors, Schwalm said.

Schwalm said since the program, part of an interdisciplinary bachelor's degree in life sciences, will be a new offering at the university, he wasn't sure how many students will enroll or how many institute faculty will be teaching courses.

All students in the program will have access to the institute's science library and some will receive internships at the Sun City facility.

The benefits of the univer-

sity-institute agreement run both ways, Sun Health's Rogers said.

"We're looking to play a role in getting ASU West off the ground and helping build that program there," Rogers said. "As that program builds, it will be helpful to us in a number of ways ... for scientists to be out of touch completely with teaching is not good for our facility."

Most institute scientists have taught classes before, either as professors or graduate teaching assistants.

There are six researchers at the Sun Health institute, all of whom have doctorate degrees.

"The nature and quality of this faculty is top-notch," said Judy Knutzen, vice provost for university relations. "It rivals any major U.S. university."

Alzheimer's

Help is available from the community

By PAUL JUTZI
Daily News-Sun staff

Friends and relatives of a loved one with Alzheimer's disease may have difficult times coming their way, but they don't have to struggle through them on their own.

"I'd like to make a plea to people: You don't have to be in this alone. There's a lot of support from the community waiting to help you through this," said Marilyn Porter, cofacilitator of Sun Health Foundation's Alzheimer's support group.

Sun Health Foundation has dedicated some of its resources to the study of Alzheimer's disease, which is conducted in the Sun Health Research Institute located on the Walter O. Boswell Hospital campus in Sun City.

Although the patient is an obvious victim, Alzheimer's disease claims other victims, too.

"It's a devastating disease to the whole family," Porter said. "It can change your life."

To help caregivers make those adjustments and manage their emotions, support groups such as Sun Health's exist, she said.

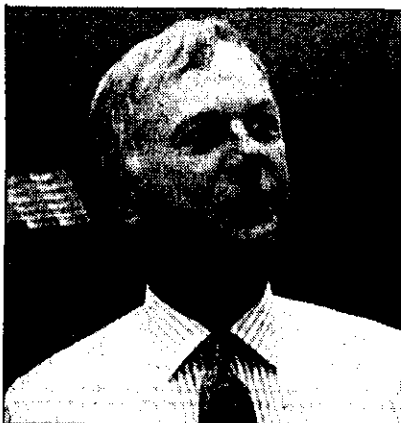
"Right now, we have a lot of members who just put loved ones in a home, and they have a lot of guilt about it," Porter said. "They're sharing the problems they're having and coming up with ways to handle them."

Several community services teach coping skills to caregivers of Alzheimer's patients, she said.

"I'm a real believer in support groups, but only a small percentage of caregivers use them," Porter said.

Some people don't attend support groups because they refuse to accept Alzheimer's as a part of their life, she said.

"Denial is often a part of the refusal," Porter said. "Some



Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the Sun Health Research Institute.

people won't even say the word Alzheimer's and don't look for help until they are almost desperate. Caregivers want life to continue the way it was, and with Alzheimer's, it can't.

"But acceptance of what's happening makes it easier to be a caregiver."

Learning about the disease can clear up a lot of misconceptions, Porter said.

"Caregivers who don't understand Alzheimer's think the odd behavior is directed toward them, and it's not," she said. "An Alzheimer's patient's brain is diseased and the patient can't think straight."

A good way for caregivers to deal with Alzheimer's disease is to not have expectations of the victim, Porter said.

"Alzheimer's is dementia, and as the brain is destroyed, a person loses intellect and cognitive abilities. If the person lives long enough, he or she will be like an infant in an adult body," she said.

Porter's support group for caregivers meets the last Monday of each month, except dur-

ing May and December, at 1:30 p.m. at 13180 N. 103rd Drive, Sun City.

Sun Health's Alzheimer's Education Program group meets the second Monday of each month in Walter O. Boswell Hospital's Support Services building behind the hospital, located at 103rd Avenue and Thunderbird Boulevard.

Sun Health operates a medical library at the north end of the Sun Health Resource Center, 13101 N. 103rd Ave. The library has a large selection of books and videotapes on Alzheimer's.

For information about the support or education group, call Porter at 974-7848.

Geriatric research facility dedicated

By Connie Cone Sexton
Staff writer

SUN CITY — A three-act play depicting the burden of Alzheimer's disease highlighted the dedication ceremony Thursday for the Sun Health Research Institute.

The 35,000-square-foot facility, at 13220 N. 105th Ave., will have areas for research on arthritis and age-related disorders, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases and geriatric oncology.

The institute has been operating in cramped quarters since about 1985, in refurbished Quonset huts alongside the

new facility.

During Thursday's program, Sun City West actors Ed Deam and Mary Kirkham played the roles of a retired couple whose lives were touched by Alzheimer's. With each act, Kirkham demonstrated how the disease progressed, leaving her dependent on her spouse.

The play, "If Only I Could Have My Marge Back," was based on the true story of Sun Citians Cletus and Marge Wiley.

Cletus Wiley died Dec. 31. His wife, a resident in the Sun Health Care Center, does not realize that her husband has died.

More than \$4 million has been raised for the research institute, the bulk of the money coming from Sun Cities residents. By the summer of 1991, \$2.5 million had been raised. The balance of the \$4 million poured in as residents saw the facility rise from the ground, Sun Health officials said.

Sun Citians Bob and Ruth Hoover contributed more than \$1.5 million. The size of their donation entitled the Hoovers to have the institute bear their name, but the couple deferred, allowing the facility to carry Sun Health's more familiar name.

Phase one, which includes the infra-

structure for the three-story building, a first-floor laboratory and offices, is complete. In about a month, phase two will be complete. It will hold separate labs and offices for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's research. Arthritis research will be conducted on the first floor.

The \$4 million should allow for the completion of phase three — a two-story building to hold a research library and conference center. A plaza also would be built to connect it with the existing building.

See INSTITUTE, Page 3

INSTITUTE

From Page 1

Phase four would include finishing the main building's third floor. When completed, the institute will encompass about 35,000 square feet.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the institute, spoke at the dedication and thanked the donors for their support.

Although Alzheimer's research is being conducted worldwide, "nowhere will you find the kind of dedication and enthusiasm" as in the Sun Health Institute, he said.

Rogers, who leads the team of researchers, hopes to find a cure for Alzheimer's, a progressive, irreversible disease that is characterized by degeneration of the brain cells.

Sun Citians and other area residents have not only donated

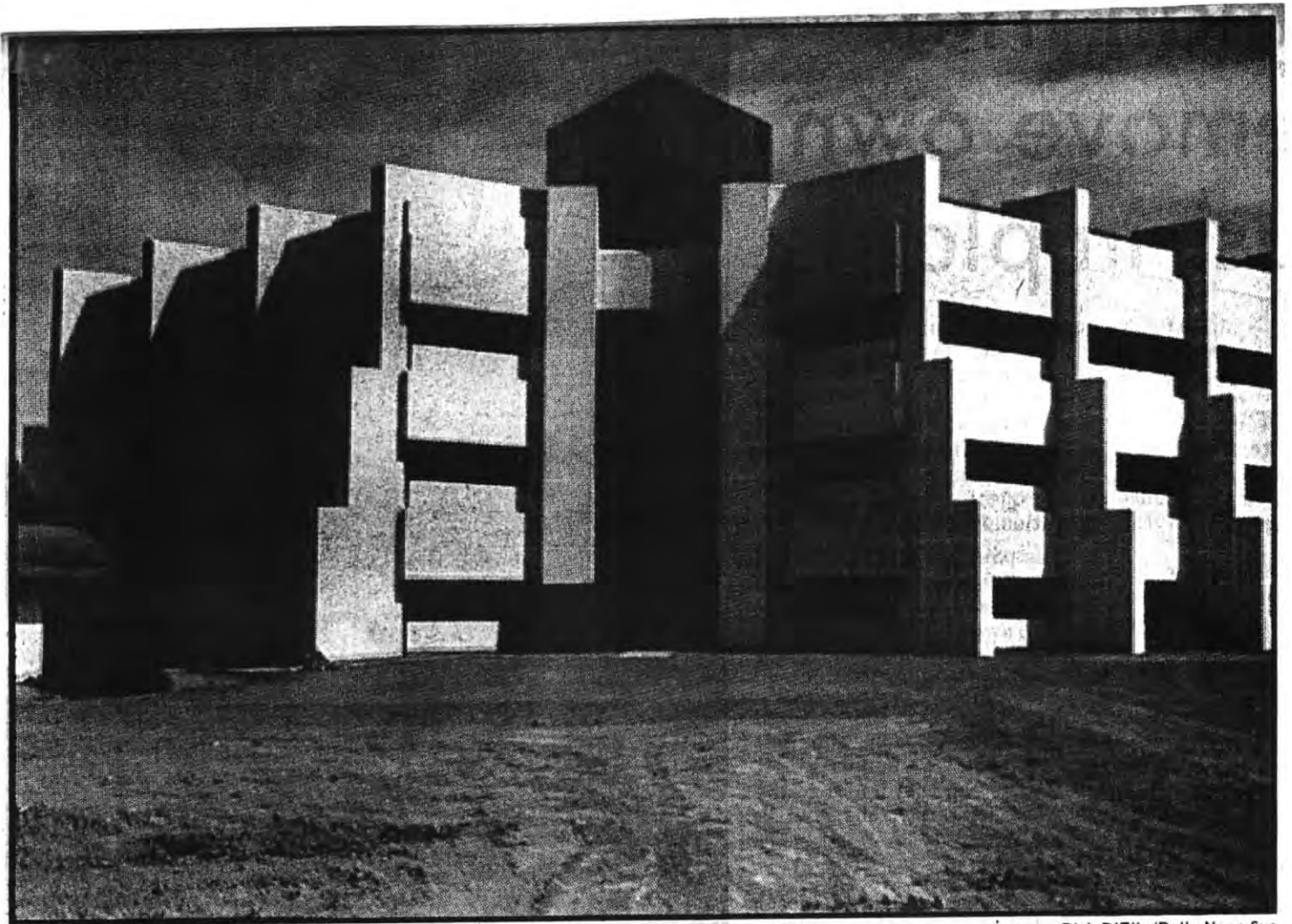
their money but of themselves by allowing their brain tissue to be used in research by the institute after their death.

Brains that are not afflicted by Alzheimer's or Parkinson's are needed as well, to let researchers make comparisons, Rogers said: "Rats and cats and dogs don't get Alzheimer's, people do. Consider making a contribution of your brain to our research. It's the biggest thing you can do."

The tissue donation program helped put the institute "on the map," he said.

"We are making great strides in the laboratory. We are now beginning clinical trials which we believe will provide the first therapy for patients."

1C



Rick D'Elia/Daily News-Sun

The 35,000-square-foot expansion of the Sun Health Research Institute was formally dedicated Thursday. The research center, formerly known as the Institute for Biogerontology Research, is dedicated to identifying the causes and cures of age-related disorders.

Institute symbolizes hope

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The community's commitment to unlock the secrets of aging and find a cure for age-related disorders was renewed Thursday morning at a dedication ceremony that attracted more than 500 area residents.

The doors were officially opened for

the new Sun Health Research Institute, formerly known as the Institute for Biogerontology Research.

The name change was revealed at the ceremony, which honored major donors who have contributed \$4 million so far for the expansion of the institute — dedicated to identifying the causes and cures of age-related disorders.

"At least now people don't have to pronounce biogerontology," Donald C. Heyl, president of the volunteer board of trustees for Sun Health Foundation, said jokingly. The foundation has been raising contributions for the institute's expansion.

The name change will help associate the institute with Sun Health

See Future generations, A3

OVER

-From A1

And now, with a donation of more than \$1.5 million by Sun Citians Robert and Ruth Hoover, a two-story research library, conference center and recognition plaza will be built as an expansion to the first floor of the institute.

The size of their contribution entitled the Hoovers to have the institute bear their name, but instead they chose to defer the honor to Sun Health.

Sun Health, however, chose "The Hoover Center for Arthritis Research," to honor the Hoovers, who moved to Sun City in 1973.

Mr. Hoover, who attended Thursday's dedication, said the donation was made to support the goal of the prevention and treatment of age-related diseases.

U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., did the honors of unlocking the institute's front door for the official opening. Afterward, residents were treated to a tour during which institute scientists demonstrated various tests in the labs.

"May the scientific studies conducted here also unlock the secrets of aging and culminate in cures that will bring new hope for generations to come," McCain said. "I don't believe there is any institute ... that holds the promise and hope this one does because of its location, staff and volunteers."

McCain said his life has been touched personally many times by people who have Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

He said he visits former Arizona Congressman Morris Udall, who has Parkinson's disease, in the hospital every week.

"In Alzheimer's, the body is trapped by failure of the mind and, in Parkinson's, it's just the opposite," McCain said. "It seems to me that society and our government have an obligation to help ... so we can find solutions to these problems."

The purpose of the public ceremony was not only to dedicate a new building and thank supporters, but to promote an understanding of what the families of patients have to endure.

Three theatrical vignettes depicting the progression of Alzheimer's, based on the real-life story of Sun Citians Marge and Cletus Wiley, were presented by Ed Deam and Mary Kirkham of Sun City West.

The dramatic vignettes left many men and women in attendance teary-eyed.

In one of the scenes, Cletus Wiley's character tries to cope with the severe state of dementia his wife is in and says, "If it is at all possible, I want you to remember this - I love you."

Cletus Wiley, who acted as the primary caregiver for his wife, died of a heart attack on Dec. 31. His wife, who is not aware that her husband has died, lives in Sun Health Care Center.

The audience paused for a moment of silence to mourn for Cletus on her behalf.

Donors who contributed \$1 million each for the Roberts Alzheimer's Center and Chris-

topher Parkinson's Center were recognized for their generosity.

Sun Citians Bob and Cleo Roberts, who donated \$1 million in 1987, said they were "thankful to be able to donate and grateful for our many wishes coming true."

Retired microbiologist Phyllis Riley, a former Sun City West resident who has volunteered in the institute, was also thanked for her contributions, as was Dr. W. Harold Civin, a retired pathologist who volunteers many hours examining brain tissue through a microscope.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, senior research scientist and director of the institute, said he hopes several more buildings will be located adjacent to the first-phase of the project, giving Sun City the world's largest privately funded research center for age-related disorders.

"Alzheimer's disease is being studied in laboratories across the country, but nowhere will you find the kind of dedication and enthusiasm you will find in this building. You have paid for this. You have made the institute possible," Rogers said.

Rogers said the institute's brain tissue donation program, thanks to donations of local residents, has turned the heads of scientists around the world.

"We have been able to provide this most critical need of brain tissue to labs throughout the world. Even if we don't find the cure for Alzheimer's in Sun City, we will most likely find it in a Sun Citian through their most generous personal donation of brain tissue," Rogers said. "You can't turn your back on Alzheimer's research once you see what it has done."



Ed Deam and Mary Kirkham of Sun City West play Cletus and Marge Wiley in a dramatization during a dedication of the Sun Health Research Institute, formerly known as the Institute for Biogerontology Research. Wiley cared for his wife, who has Alzheimer's, until his death last year.

Research institute opens in SC

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

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"At least now people don't have to pronounce biogerontology," Donald C. Heyl, president of the volunteer board of trustees for Sun Health Foundation, said jokingly. The foundation has been raising contributions for the institute's expansion.

The name change will help associate the institute with Sun Health Corp., which gave the initial \$2 million endowment in 1986 to get the idea off the ground, said Leland Peterson, Sun Health chief executive officer.

"Sun Health has long been interested in research and ed-

ucation," Peterson said. "You look around and there's no place like the Sun Cities. There are more retirees here than anywhere else in the world. For that reason, it's only natural that aging research would go here."

When construction started last summer on the expansion, local residents had donated \$2.5 million to build one wing for lab space and the building's superstructure. The site is at 105th Avenue and Santa Fe Drive.

Meanwhile, more money was donated to complete the entire second floor, which should be ready for occupancy next month.

And now, with a donation of more than \$1.5 million by Sun Citizens Robert and Ruth Hoover, a two-story research library, conference center and recognition plaza will be built as an expansion to the first floor of the institute.

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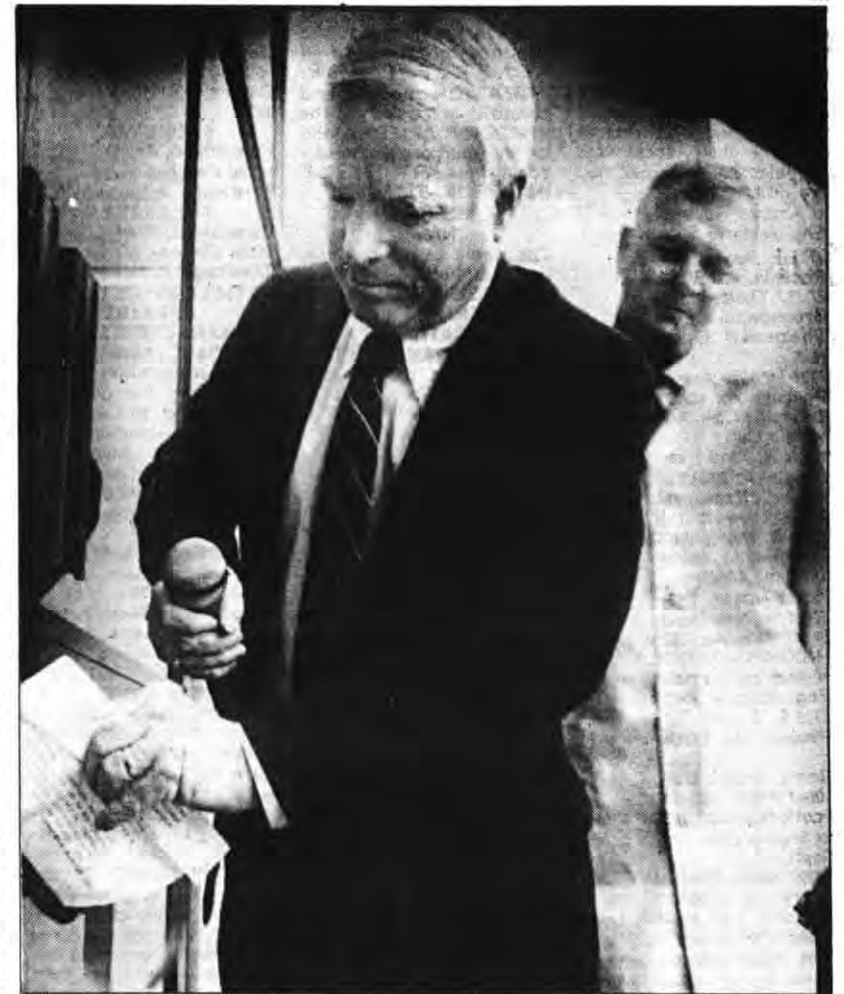
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Rick D'Elia/Daily News-Sun

Under the watchful eyes of Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the Sun Health Research Institute, Sen. John McCain unlocks the doors to what he describes as the promise and hope of the future.

through a microscope.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, senior research scientist and director of the institute, said he hopes several more buildings will be

located adjacent to the first-phase of the project, giving Sun City the world's largest privately funded research center for age-related disorders.

1C

Center reflects giving

Residents give time, money

Last in a series
By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Institute of Biogerontology Research was founded to help older Americans. And residents of the retirement communities have shown their appreciation with unparalleled contributions of money and time.

About \$3.2 million in donations from Sun Cities' residents have been received by Sun Health Foundation for the institute and an additional \$2.5 million pledged by local residents in deferred donations.

Dedication ceremonies are planned for 10 a.m. Thursday for the opening of the 35,000-square-foot expansion of Sun Health's IBR center. The three-story building adjacent to the original center at 13220 N. 105th Ave. will provide space for researchers to study diseases that affect the elderly.

The expansion project, which will cost about \$5 million when complete, is being funded entirely by community donations to Sun Health Foundation.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, the institute's director, said he hopes to receive endowments for research to match the generosity of the building fund.

"We need to make the science happen. A building alone won't make it happen. Federal funding has been cut tremendously and it's a very dog-eat-dog world for a slice of the pie," Rogers said. "But if no one gave us a dime more, you couldn't complain. This is one of the most remarkable scenes of community generosity I have ever seen. It couldn't happen anywhere else."

The first major donation came from Sun Citians Bob

and Cleo Roberts, who gave \$1 million in 1987 to provide a home for research on Alzheimer's disease and other age-related disorders.

"My heart goes out to this center. I had a grandmother who died of Parkinson's and my wife has two aunts with Alzheimer's," said Roberts, who moved with his wife to Sun City in 1968.

"We finally found a place we love and we wanted to do something for the community because we feel this is the logical place to study diseases

of the elderly."

The Roberts Alzheimer's Center is on the second floor of the expansion. The Christopher Parkinson's Center, named after a former Sun City couple who donated more than \$1 million for construction and research, is also on the second floor.

An anonymous local resident donated \$750,000 for the center's research library, which is expected to be built by December. The donor also was instrumental in getting an arthritis center built on the first

floor.

"Now it's time we try to do something about this debilitating and horrible disease. Alzheimer's, cancer, heart (diseases) are all important," Roberts said. "This is not just a community thing. It's a universal thing. I think we will make our notch in the world."

In addition to the financial contributions made so far by Sun Cities residents, Rogers said two Sun City area residents have helped the institute staff by spending many hours

See Research center, A5

in the lab.

One is Dr. W. Harold Civin, who has worked in the Alzheimer's laboratory three hours a day, five days a week, since 1987.

"Without him this institute would never have gotten off the ground," Rogers said. "Rats, cats and dogs don't get Alzheimer's. People do. And we needed a pathologist's experience here to make our research effective."

Civin, a retired pathologist, moved to Sun City in 1971 and decided to offer his expertise to the institute on a voluntary basis.

He was instrumental in establishing the institute's brain bank that sends tissue to 100 institutes throughout the world. In addition, Civin does a great deal of research for the institute and reads slides of brain tissue to determine whether a patient has Alzheimer's disease.

"It's a great feeling when you make any kind of progress. I

hope they can find a cure for both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's," Civin said.

Rogers said he hopes to name the pathology area on the second floor of the expansion after Civin and is trying to collect money to do so.

The institute's expansion into Parkinson's disease research has been largely supported by former Sun City West resident Phyllis Riely.

Riely, 74, who now lives in Freedom Plaza, Peoria, is a retired microbiologist who has Parkinson's.

The holder of many medical patents, Riely has given the institute a number of ideas to help Parkinson's patients.

"I am so excited about the research going on here," said Riely, who has money endowed to the institute. "Once they get a good tissue culture (to substitute brain matter that Parkinson's patients lose), I will be the first in line."

OVER



Sun Citizen Dr. W. Harold Civin, a retired pathologist, has volunteered his time at the Institute of Biogerontology Research since 1987. Civin spends hours looking through a microscope at a brain tissue samples of Alzheimer's patients.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Phyllis Riely, 74, a retired microbiologist, has donated countless hours developing ideas to help people with Parkinson's disease as a consultant for the Institute of Biogerontology Research. Riely stands in one of the new laboratories built in the institute's three-story expansion.

IC

Institute harbors hope for victims of disease

Second in a series
By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — It's a house of hope for scientists longing to find a cure for age-related disorders.

While local residents watch with pride the grand opening Thursday of a new building on the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital campus, scientists around the world are focusing on the research going on inside.

The 35,000-square-foot expansion of the Institute of Biogerontology Research opens Thursday amid glimmers of hope from scientists that headway is being made into cures and prevention of age-related diseases.

Patrick McGeer, a professor at the University of British Columbia School of Medicine who visited the new building last week, said scientists throughout the world are keeping close tabs on the progress of a study at the Sun City research center involving the use of the drug Indocin.

"This is the most important clinical trial (study) going on in the world today. It's the only clinical trial directed at addressing the death of neurons, which are nerve cells that die by the millions in Alzheimer's patients," McGeer said. "Other trials alter the biochemistry without tackling the problem."

The on-going controlled study involving the use of Indocin, an anti-inflammatory drug, will continue at the new Alzheimer's center inside the new IL building, said Dr. Joseph Rogers, IBR director.

Rogers said he hopes the study will show that the drug, used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, may halt or slow progress of Alzheimer's disease.

"Sun City is one of the best places to trial genetic drugs. We need to have centers to use this community effectively as a research tool," Rogers said.

Research under way at the IBR is not limited to finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease.

The first two floors of the three-story building will include research centers for arthritis, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Although only half of the \$5 million expansion for the first phase is completed, additional space will some day promote research of other age-related disorders such as prostate cancer, Rogers said.

Each center includes two fully equipped laboratories, conference rooms, offices, storage space, sterilizers, walk-in cold rooms, warm rooms, high-powered microscopes and other equipment needed for research and testing.

The building also includes hazardous waste storage areas, pathology storage for brain material, an employee lounge, a film processing lab and high-powered electron microscope that will be shared by all IBR staff members.

The triangular design and winged buttresses of the new expansion were designed to make the building look larger than it is, Rogers said.

But the real big picture is what will go on inside the building.

The Roberts Alzheimer's Center will be used for a number of tests using brain tissue to study the progressive neurological disease.

Alzheimer's disease, with no known cure, is a degenerative brain disease, causing dementia in older adults. Symptoms include gradual memory loss, impaired judgment, disorientation, personality change, learning difficulty and loss of language skills.

The main laboratory of the Alzheimer's center will be used for basic research on the body's own immune system, which Rogers said is in part responsible for damage of the brain.

In the smaller lab, scientists will look at slices of brain of Alzheimer's and normal patients to get clues on how Alzheimer's gets started in the brain and how it spreads.

The electron microscope, which magnifies objects by a million times, would help researchers see how damage to nerve cells occurs in Alzheimer's disease, Rogers said. The microscope, for example, would enlarge a dime to be the size of Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital, he said.

The Parkinson's center will also work on tackling the mysteries of the disease, which causes tremors and muscle rigidity in the aged.

Dr. Randy Strong of the University of St. Louis Medical School, who has been recruited to head the Parkinson's center, will study the so-called "black spot" the size of a thumbnail in the base of the brain.

The black spot produces a type of "chemical messenger" that triggers voluntary movements that are cut off when a person has Parkinson's, Rogers said.

Although dopamine and other drugs can be used to control Parkinson's, they often have side affects.

So scientists will be trying to synthesize the enzyme that produces the chemical messenger, Rogers said.

"To make the growth cells they will try to take neurons from a recent autopsy and fool them into dividing and grow. No one in the world has yet been able to make it work," Rogers said. "No one ever seen a nerve cell die so our work in the past has been trying to reconstruct an accident without a witnesses. This study may give us a window into the brain."

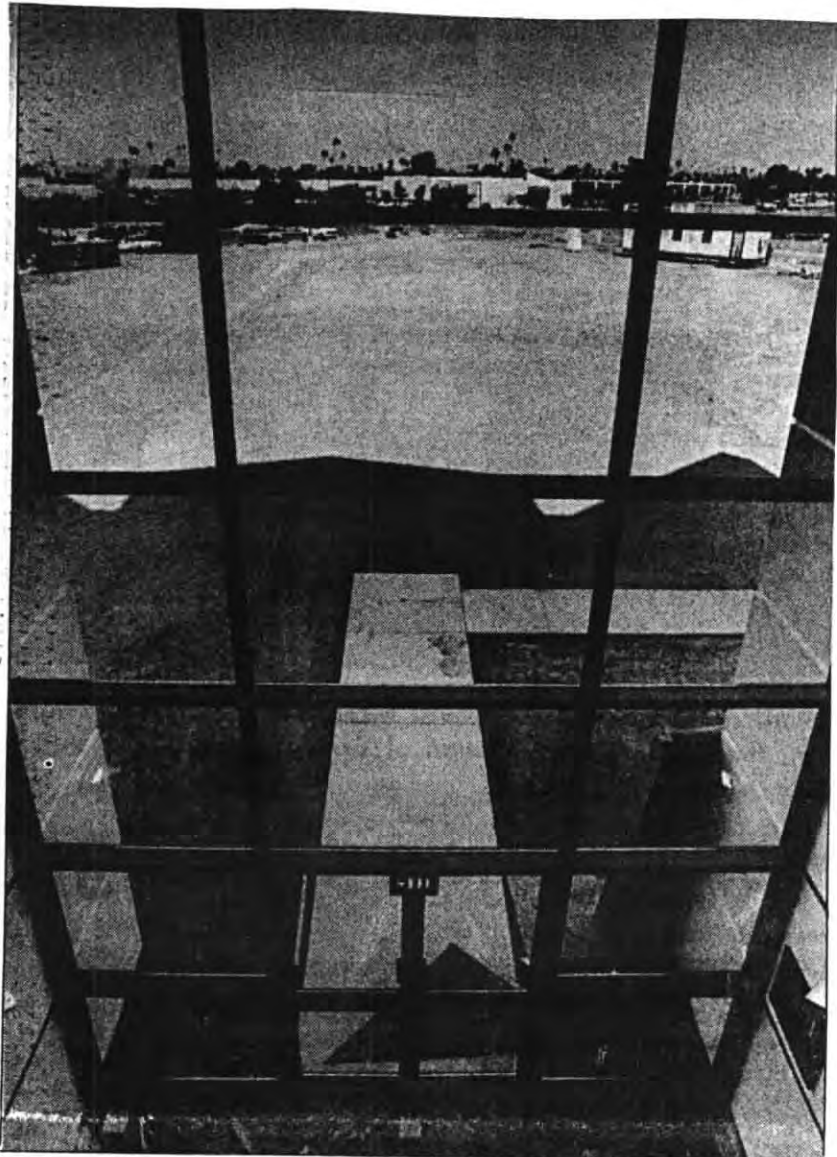
The new expansion will provide tissue culture rooms for growing cells, incubators and other items used in tissue cultivation for the Parkinson's center.

All the research centers will also benefit from projects developed in the expansion's new computer center, Rogers said.

The computer can sample and count millions of nerve cells in a sample that could take years to count otherwise, Rogers said.

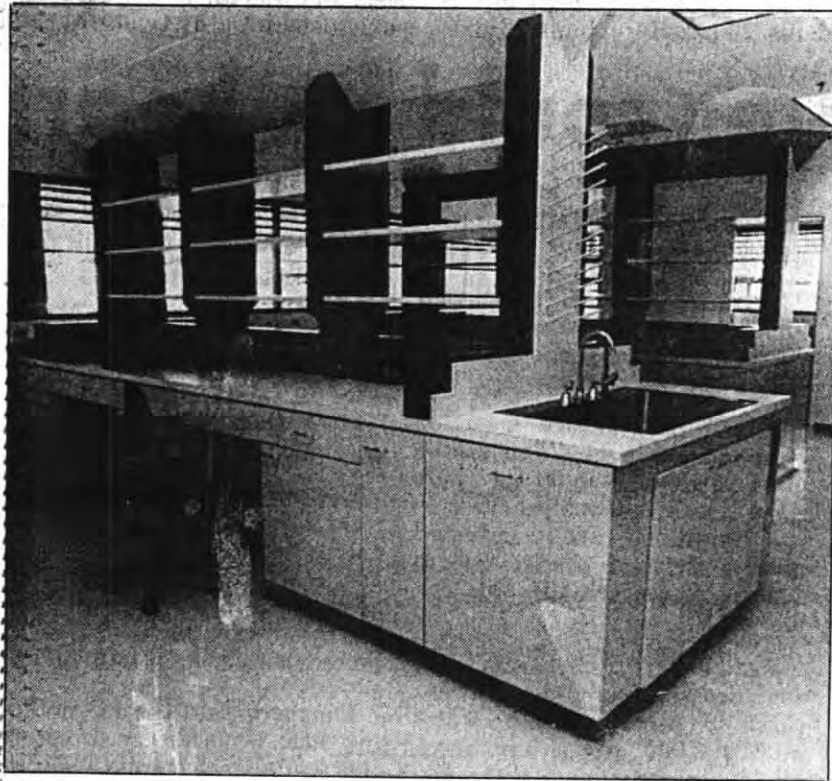
"The research here is pragmatic. There is no ivory tower, no university-type research. It's very focused on research that is relative to the human condition," Rogers said.

OVER



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

The window of the main entrance of the expanded Institute of Biogerontology Research overlooks the site of a research library expected to be built by December. The 35,000-square-foot expansion will be dedicated at a public ceremony Thursday.



This laboratory is in the new three-story Institute of Biogerontology Research, which will include research centers for arthritis, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Each laboratory will be fully equipped with everything from sterilizers to acid washers.

10



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of Sun Health Corp.'s Institute for Biogerontology, stands in a laboratory that is part of a new three-story, 35,000-square-foot expansion in Sun City. The building will be dedicated Thursday morning.

Dream of research center comes true for Sun Health

First in a series

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — In the early 1980s, Sun Health Corp. envisioned conducting research on age-related diseases in the middle of the country's largest retirement community.

Inspired by 8 percent of the people 65 and older in the world who have Alzheimer's disease, a dream of building an institute dedicated to identifying the

causes and cures of debilitating diseases relating to aging began to unfold.

The dream to begin research became a reality in 1986 with a \$2 million endowment from the corporation to establish the Institute of Biogerontology Research.

"Sun Health decided that it wanted to have something that did more than take care of people when they are sick. Sun Health wanted to help people

from getting sick in the first place," said Dr. Joseph Rogers, who came from Harvard University to be the institute's director.

Shortly after Rogers was hired in 1986, a Sun City couple donated \$1 million to give the idea of a research center a real home.

Old portable buildings on the Boswell campus were gutted to accommodate laboratory space for the L.C. Roberts Center for

See Public dedication, A5

OVER

Public dedication set for Thursday

— From A1

Alzheimer's Research.

"We started with a staff of myself and my typewriter," Rogers said. "Now we have 22 on staff, with six people at the Ph.D level."

Through its tissue donation program, the institute has become one of the world's leading sources of diseased and normal brain tissue for research centers.

Researchers conduct thousands of studies with the brain tissue and other matter in an effort to unlock the mysteries of age-related neurological disorders.

But the cramped quarters of the portable buildings was not enough to take the IBR team as far as it could go in its quest to discover treatments and cures for age-related disorders, Rogers said.

"We did not have the space or physical credibility to attract good, big-name scientists," Rogers said. "There are people out there who are willing to come see that Sun City is the ideal place to be if you are doing aging research. We just had to give them a reason to come."

A three-story, 35,000-square-foot building next door to the institute's original site at 13220 N. 105th Ave., will attract the country's top researchers, Rogers said.

Construction on the building began last year and completed

Public ceremony will mark opening of center's Phase I

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The expansion of Sun Health Corp.'s Institute of Biogerontology Research will open Thursday during a dedication ceremony in the entrance of the new building, 13220 N. 105th Ave.

The dedication marks the completion of Phase I, which includes the building's superstructure and one wing of laboratory space on the ground floor.

The expansion project, which will cost about \$5 million when complete, is being funded entirely by community donations to Sun Health Foundation.

The dedication will be from 9 to 10 a.m. and is open to the public. Parking is available in the southwest parking lot behind the hospital and across the street from the institute.

Sen. John McCain, R-Phoenix, will open the doors of the IBR expansion at the ceremony and discuss the

portions include Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and arthritis research centers complete with laboratories, freezers, warm

significance of the community-supported facility and the importance of research into age-related diseases.

Institute Director Dr. Joseph Rogers, Sun Health President Leland Peterson and others will also speak on support and research efforts.

Three theatrical vignettes that depict the progression of Alzheimer's disease based on real-life stories will be performed to the vocal accompaniment of Vicki McDermitt.

The three-story, 35,000-square-foot building includes lab stations, equipment, walk-in freezers, dark rooms, warm rooms, storage and glass sterilization areas.

The laboratory area will house displays and demonstrations reflecting various aspects of the research.

For information about the dedication, call 876-5325.

rooms, sterilization areas and other equipment.

Dr. Randy Strong of the University of St. Louis Medical

School has been recruited to head the Parkinson's research center. Rogers will continue to head the institute's Alzheimer's research center.

A public dedication at 9 a.m. Thursday will celebrate the opening of the building, which is now 50 percent completed.

The completed project, which will include an adjacent memorial garden and research library, will cost about \$5 million. Rogers said he hopes the library will be completed by December.

"We looked at many other research facilities throughout the country and this center is not only more beautiful and functional, but it cost about half of what it would probably cost elsewhere," Rogers said.

About \$3.2 million in donations from Sun Cities residents have been received by Sun Health Foundation for the institute, said Dr. Leonard Gibb, director of planned giving.

Gibb said an additional \$2.5 million has been pledged by local residents in deferred donations.

"As this building went up it gave people a visual reminder of what the institute had done in Sun City," Rogers said. "Month by month people came up with donations and we were able to build more and more. I expect that this will continue."

Brain repository

Local tissue samples sent across country

By J.J. McCORMACK
Daily News-Sun staff

It takes brains to find a cure for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

The Institute for Biogerontology Research in Sun City has the brains to do it — more than 200 diseased and healthy brains in fact — making it the largest repository of aged brain tissue in the United States.

Because of its size, the IBR brain bank shares tissue with scientists and researchers around the globe who, like IBR Director Dr. Joseph Rogers, are seeking cures for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Alzheimer's is a degenerative brain disease, causing dementia in older adults. Parkinson's causes tremors and muscle rigidity in the aged.

Rogers isn't selfish with the institute's tissue. Sharing the wealth is an obligation, he said, "because rats, cats and dogs don't get Alzheimer's disease." Only humans get it.

For that reason, Rogers considers donated brain tissue "more precious than money" to his cause.

That cause began 4½ years ago when the former Harvard University scientist, in association with Sun Health Corp., founded the IBR. Since opening its doors, the research center has received an average of 50 healthy and diseased brain donations a year.

"Fifty a year is about right. It's enough to serve all our needs and a lot of this country's needs," Rogers said.

Sun City donors account for about 90 percent of IBR's brain bank tissue, Rogers said. He attributed that generosity to the

families of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's patients who know how important research is.

Because the brain deteriorates faster than any other vital organ, it must be preserved within three hours of death. The task often has Rogers and IBR staffers hurrying to the lab in the middle of the night.

"Most people die at night," he said.

Rogers and his staff can use preserved brain tissue indefinitely as they try to unlock the mysteries of age-related neurological disorders.

"The critical variable in the beginning of a lot of good research is that brain bank," he said.

Although presently IBR's 18-member staff is focusing its efforts on finding cures for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, a new 37,000 square-foot research center under construction at 105th Avenue and Santa Fe Drive in Sun City will provide the additional space needed to research other age-related disorders like prostate cancer.

"In my opinion, the best way to live long
See Samples, A5

Samples important in research

—From A1

is to be spared major age-related diseases," Rogers said.

In Rogers' opinion, an Alz-

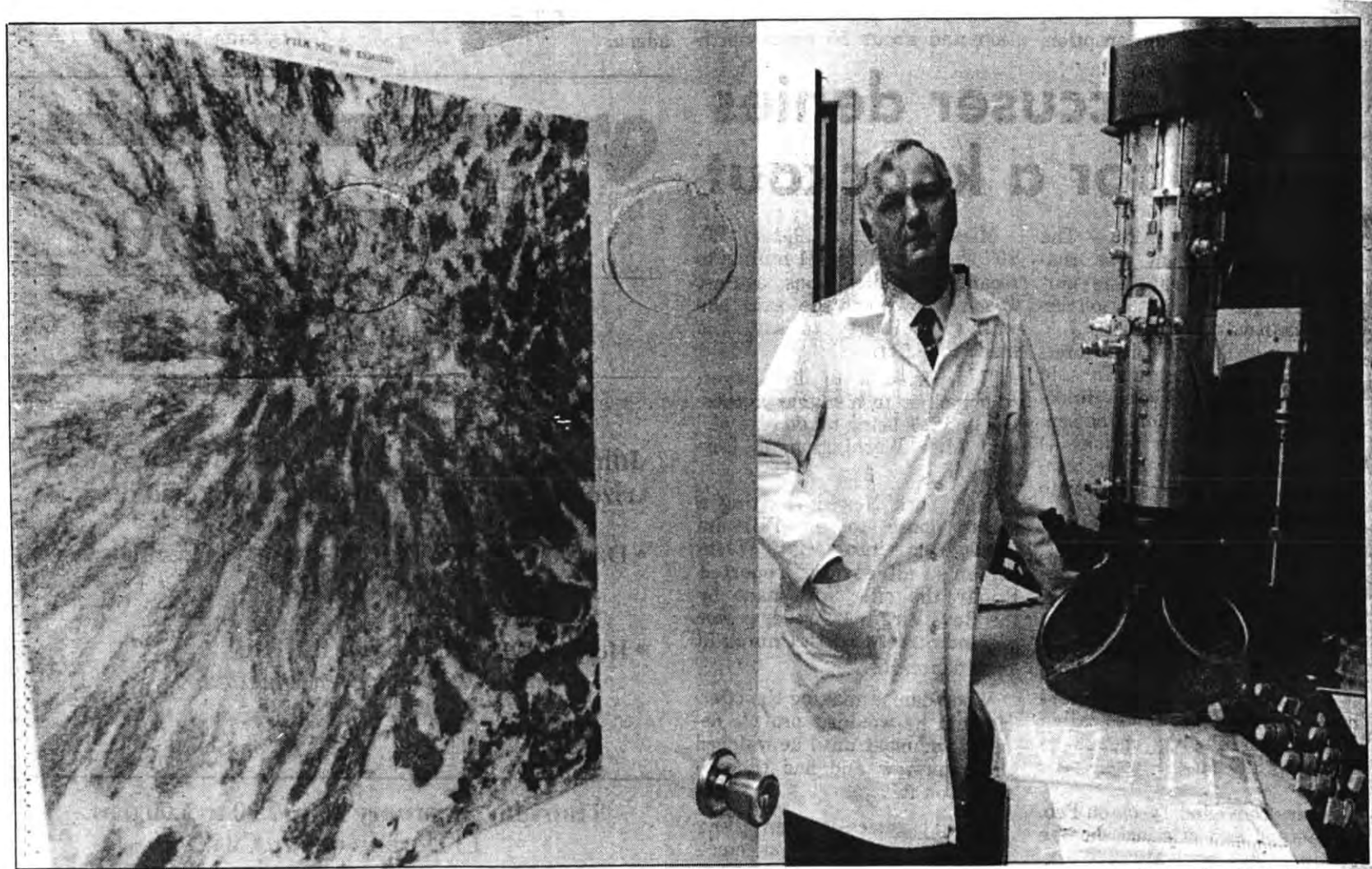
heimer's cure will be found within 20 years if society continues to support the research that the IBR and other laboratories are doing.

Thanks to that support, Rogers said the IBR is conducting clinical trials with a drug that is preventing Alzheimer's

patients from getting worse, Rogers said.

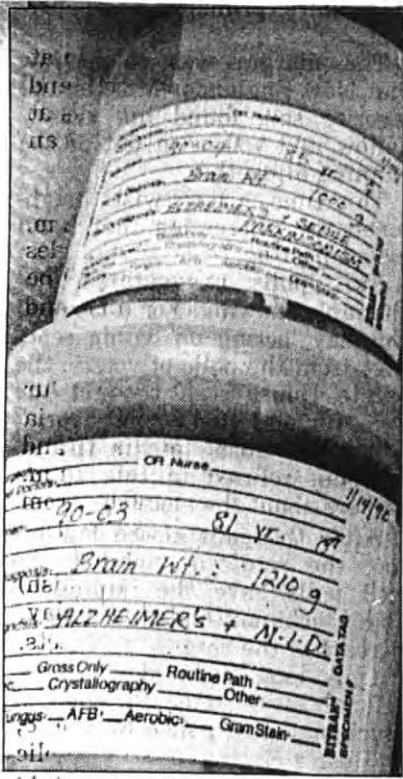
"We have learned more in the last two years than in the previous 80," he said. "The research is beginning to bear fruit."

For information about the IBR donor program, call 876-5328.



Stephen Cherek/Daily News-Sun

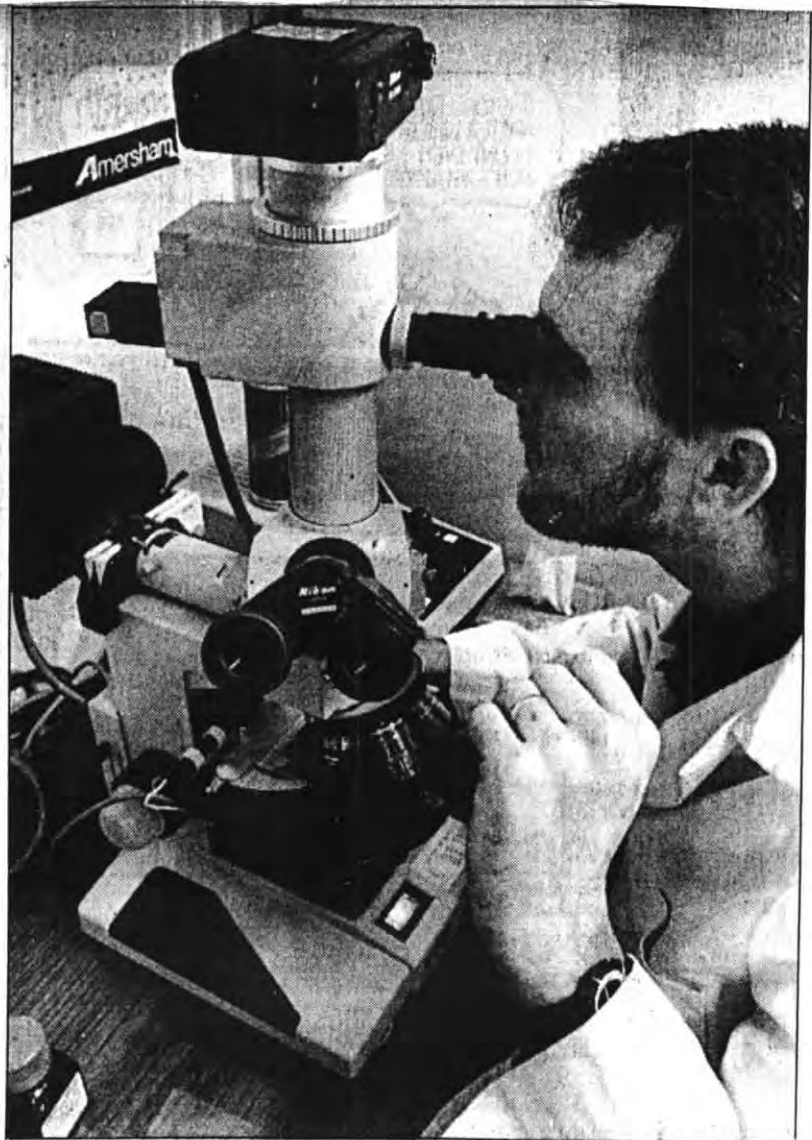
Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the Institute for Biogerontology Research in Sun City, stands beside the institute's electron microscope. A magnified photograph of brain tissue taken by the microscope is posted on the lab's door.



Brain tissue used in research is stored at the IBR.

'We have learned more in the last two years than in the previous 80. The research is beginning to bear fruit.'

Dr. Joseph Rogers
IBR director

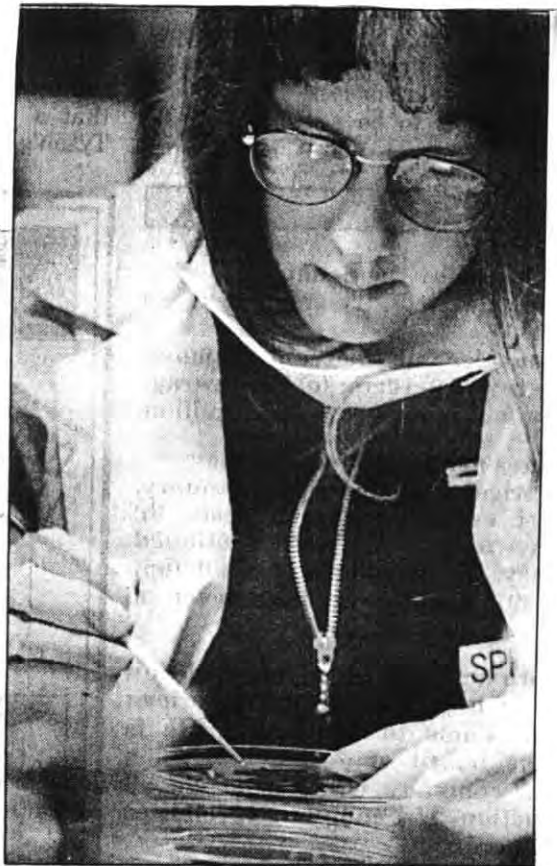


Stephen Chernenk/Daily News-Sun

Scott Webster, a lab technician at the Institute for Biogerontology Research, takes a photograph of brain tissue with a microscope equipped for photography.



This photograph of a slice of brain tissue, magnified 10 times, was taken by Scott Webster at the Institute for Biogerontology Research



Susan Byttner, a lab technician, prepares a microscope slide for viewing.

Ceremony celebrates expansion of research center

Sun Health will hold a ceremony Oct. 26 celebrating the expansion of the firm's Institute for Biogerontology Research.

The ceremony will be held 9-10 a.m. on the Boswell Hospital campus near the construction site next to the institute's original facility at 13220 N. 105th Ave., Sun City.

Parking will be available behind and on the west side of the hospital and at the Thunderbird Medical Plaza on the corner of 105th Avenue and Thunderbird.

The construction of the 32,000

square-foot expansion is already underway. The expansion will cost \$4 million, of which \$2.5 million has already been raised.

The ceremony will echo the theme, "new hope for both older and younger generations."

The Institute for Biogerontology Research focuses on Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, geriatric oncology and other age-related disorders.

Entertainment will be provided by the Phoenix Boys Choir. The Luke Air Force Base Color Guard and the Arizona Cactus Pine Girl

Scout Troop, No. 739, will also appear at the ceremony.

Area residents are encouraged to bring along snapshots of special friends and relatives who have "been a source of inspiration and hope in their lives."

Those who wish to participate are asked to donate \$25 or more as a "tribute" to someone special.

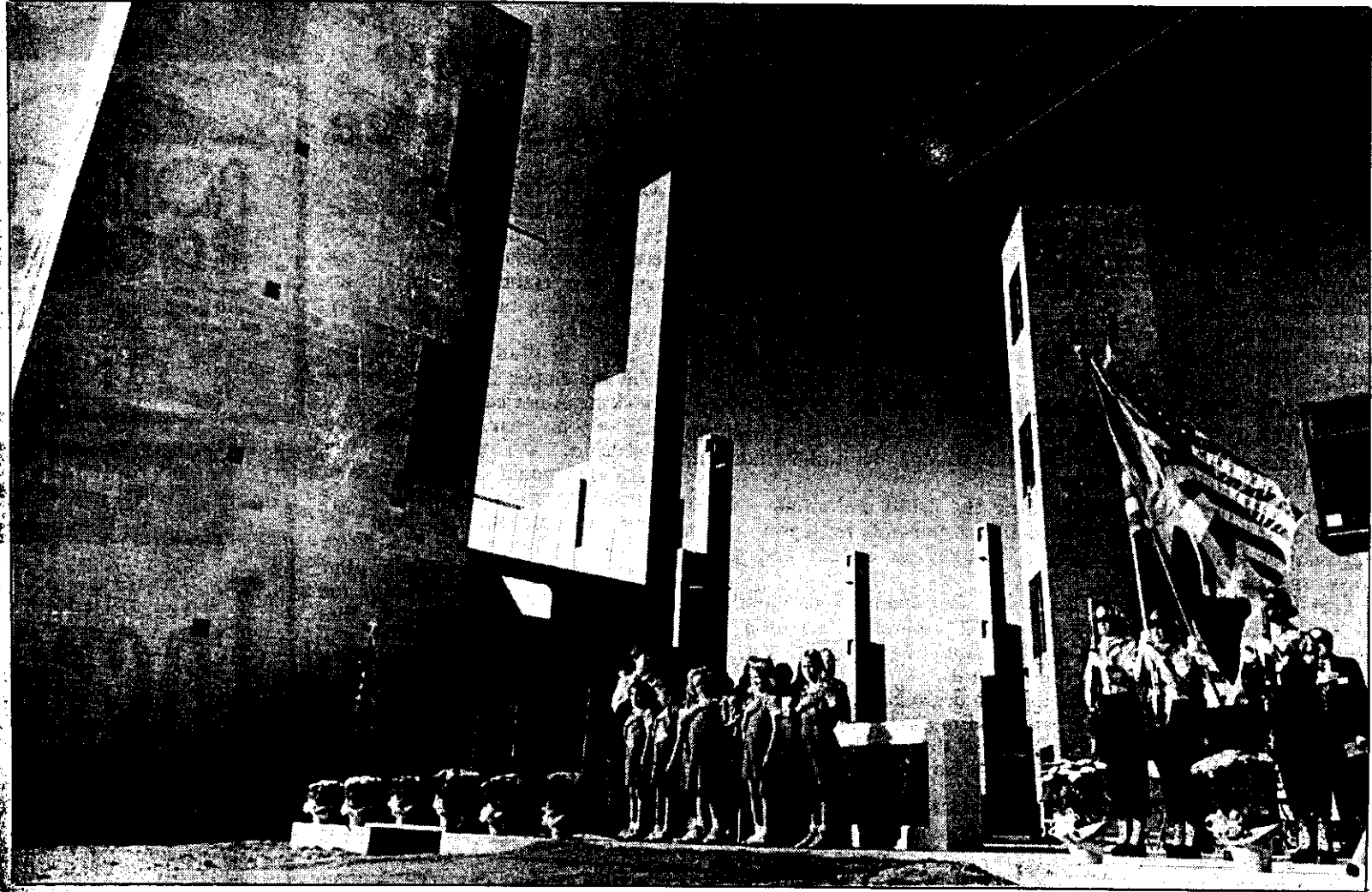
Special Celebration Tribute Forms will be available in the lobbies of the Webb and Boswell Hospitals, as well as at area real estate offices.

The snapshots will be placed in a

cornerstone that will become a part of the building's structure until the year 2001. At that time, another ceremony will be held to unveil the snapshots and announce the research progress to date.

"If cures and treatments are not fully discovered in Sun City, most likely the contributions made by area residents will significantly impact the discovery of treatments and cures wherever they occur," says Joseph Rogers, Ph.D., director of the institute and head of the L.J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research. Call 876-5325.

Monday, Oct. 28, 1991 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.



Stephen Cherek/Daily News-Sun

A Luke Air Force Base color guard presents the colors at a cornerstone ceremony at the Institute for Biogerontology Research expansion site in Sun City. Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the Institute for Biogerontology Research, made the keynote speech at the ceremony Saturday. The

Phoenix Boys Choir Town Singers presented a varied program of songs, and Leland Peterson, president and chief executive officer of Sun Health Corp., read a list of items to be placed in a time capsule in the cornerstone. The capsule will be opened in 2001.

Seeking the cure

Sun City supports Alzheimer's research

By Connie Cone Sexton
Staff writer

Sun City

T rue or false: People get Alzheimer's disease because they are retired couch potatoes. It's your brain — use it or lose it.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the Sun Health Institute for Biogerontology Research Center in Sun City, winces at such a notion.

"A surprising number of people think that's what happens to retired people who aren't active anymore. But Alzheimer's is one of the most terrible, dehumanizing diseases" that scientists have yet to find a cause or known cure for, Rogers said during a recent inter-

view.

Alzheimer's is a progressive, irreversible disease that is characterized by degeneration of the brain cells.

He credits the Sun Cities population for its support of Alzheimer's research. Residents have donated more than \$2.2 million for the first phase of an expansion project for the institute. At least \$1.8 million more is needed to complete the IBR project.

A cornerstone ceremony to celebrate the 32,000-square-foot expansion is scheduled for 9 to 10 a.m. Saturday near the IBR's current location, 13220 N. 105th Ave. Construction, which began in August, is expected to be completed by

See RESEARCH, Page 2



Communi

RESEARCH

early March.

For now, the institute's research team works in about 8,000 square feet of space in refurbished Quonset huts on the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital Campus.

Rogers is excited about the work the institute has been doing since its inception in 1985. "We have gathered some very, very strong evidence now in collaboration with a group at the Scripts Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla, Calif., that there is a novel inflammatory process that goes on in the brain of Alzheimer's patients."

The focus of his study involves an abnormal protein called beta amyloid that occurs only in the brain.

"The protein is found in excess in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. It actually activates the immune system and causes the immune system to come in and try to wipe it out.

"Let's say you cut your finger and bacteria gets in the wound and causes an infection. Well, your immune system is going to respond to that. It responds to both the presence of something foreign —

"The protein is found in excess in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. It actually activates the immune system and causes the immune system to come in and try to wipe it out."

Dr. Joseph Rogers

Director

Sun Health Institute for
Biogerontology Research Center

the bacteria wall — and it also responds in general to injury.

"So cells and molecules of the immune system migrate to the area. And then to clear out the infection and to cleanse the wound, basically what the immune system does is just chews up everything in sight. It chews up damaged cells, infected cells, dead cells, healthy cells, anything that is in the vicinity is going to get chewed up. Now that's a great strategy for your skin because after that's all cleared up, you'll just grow some new skin cells. Your wound will heal and you'll be good as new," he said.

From Page 1

But it's a bad strategy for the brain because the body cannot grow any more brain cells, he said.

It was thought that nature had kept the immune system out of the brain for that reason.

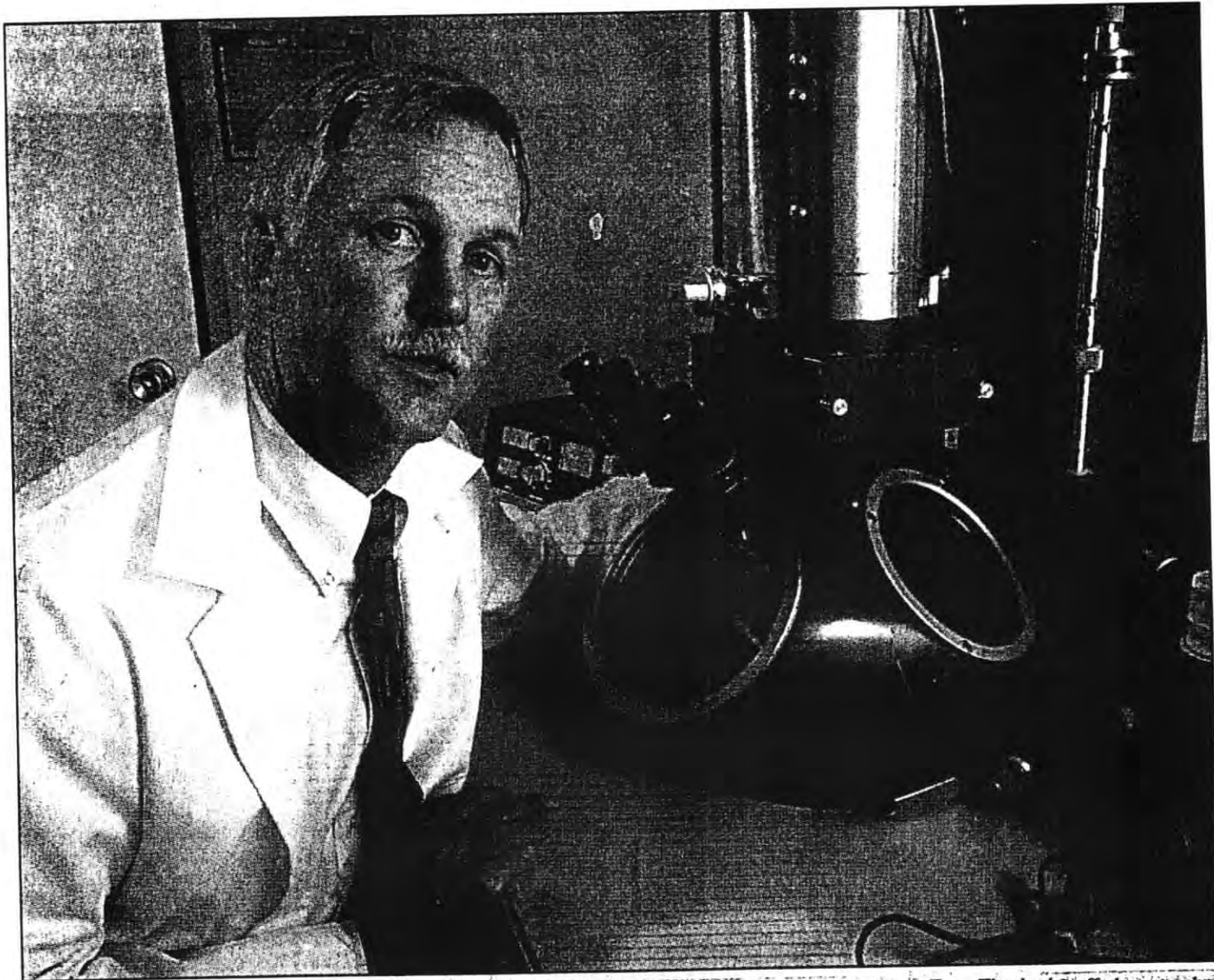
Somehow, the immune system has penetrated the brain of an Alzheimer's patient, triggered by the presence of the beta amyloid, Rogers said.

Because the immune system interprets beta amyloid as a foreign body, it destroys everything in its path, he said.

He is banking on a process that can slow down the ravages of the immune system, possibly with high doses of anti-inflammatory aspirin-like drugs like Endocin.

Fifty patients are part of clinical trials the IBR center is conducting; 25 are on Endocin, 25 on a placebo. Their sixth-month mark will be January, when a progress report will be taken.

Rogers holds out hope that someone soon will find a cure or cause of Alzheimer's. In the meantime, he says perhaps something can be found to slow down its devastation.



Tom Tingle / Staff photographer

Dr. Joseph Rogers (above), director of the Sun Health Institute for Biogerontology Research Center in Sun City, shows off an electron microscope used in the study of Alzheimer's disease. Below, Rogers confers with Dr. Emily Lue of the research center as she cuts brain tissue on a vibratome.

Grant bolsters local research

SUN CITY — The Sun City Institute for Biogerontology Research has received a \$600,000 grant from the National Institute on Aging to further its research into the effects of Alzheimer's disease on the human brain.

"The grant will be used to conduct an in depth evaluation of the amygdala, hippocampus and limbic system, all of which are believed to be involved in memory and the control of emotions," said Joseph Rogers, Ph.D., director of Sun Health's Institute and principle investigator of the L.J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research.

Individuals with Alzheimer's disease commonly experience memory loss. In its later stages, patients often exhibit uncharacteristic behavioral and

emotional changes. Circumstances that fostered little reaction before the onset of the disease may trigger intense feelings of anger or frustration in the Alzheimer's patient, said Rogers.

"Why these changes occur is the focus of this study," he said. "Grants like this one contain the keys that unlock doors of possibility, just like the community donations that are vital to completing the Institute's 32,000 square-foot expansion.

To date, nearly \$3 million in research grants have been awarded to the Institute from the NIA, the National Institutes of Health, the Arizona Disease Control Commission and the American Health Assistance Foundation, among other public and private foundation resources.

IC

Local donation benefits biogerontology institute

Former Sun Citizens now living in Kansas, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Christopher, are being recognized for their deferred gift of \$1 million to the Institute for Biogerontology Research.

The Parkinson's Research Center, the second of three centers at the institute, will be named in honor of the Christophers, according to Donald C. Heyl, president of the Sun Health Foundation.

A deferred gift is given during a donor's lifetime although benefits to the organization usually do not accrue until an established time following death of the donor.

Upon its completion, the Christopher Center for Parkinson's Research will be part of the 32,000 square-foot institute expansion, which is currently under construction.

The first center in the institute to be named was the L.J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research, in honor of Sun Citizens Bob and Cleo Roberts.

The third center, for oncology research, is being built and is not yet named.

The institute and Sun Health Foundation can name the new oncology research center to reflect the commitment of the donor, trust or corporation willing to make a gift of \$1.5 million to the major research effort, according to Sun Health spokesmen.

Phase I of the institute's construction is under way, made possible through community donations already totaling \$2.5 million.

More than \$1.5 million still is needed to complete the interior of the building, the first floor and the entire second floor, as well as the institute's Recognition Plaza, research library and administrative space.

IBR wing to bear donors' name

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Parkinson's disease wing of the proposed Sun City Institute for Biogerontology Research centers will be named in honor of a former Sun City couple who donated more than \$1 million for its construction and research.

The Parkinson's Research Center adjacent to the current IBR building on the south end of the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital campus will be named the Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Christopher Center for Parkinson's Research upon its completion, said Sun Health Foundation President Donald C. Heyl.

It will be part of the 32,000-square-foot IBR expansion

project now under construction.

Although now residing in their former hometown of Hutchinson, Kan., the Christophers began realizing the need for intensified Parkinson's research when Tom Christopher was diagnosed with the disease several years ago while living in Sun City.

The Christophers lived in Sun City from January 1972 until this past April.

The couple donated a one-time deferred gift of \$1 million and another \$150,000 in cash, said Ruby Christopher from her Hutchinson home Tuesday.

"We wanted to do something for humanity, something that will help somebody else," she said.

Parkinson's, a degenerative disease that usually affects the elderly, causes uncontrollable rhythmic tremors and muscular rigidity and has no known cure.

"We think it's a good research program they have there and just thought this is what we'd like to do," she said.

"We liked and enjoyed Sun City very much for 19 years but decided to move back here because of his (her husband's) health and because we have family here who can help us out some," Ruby said.

A deferred gift is given during a donor's lifetime although benefits to the benefactor organization usually don't accrue until an established time following the donor's death. In return, Sun

Health Foundation provides lifetime earned interest to the donors.

Heyl said the proposed expanded Alzheimer's Research Center was named the L.J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research in 1987 in honor of Sun Citizens Bob and Cleo Roberts, who have seen first-hand the devastating effects of Alzheimer's on family and friends.

The Roberts have donated more than \$1 million to Alzheimer's research at the current IBR clinic and for future research at the expanded center.

The third proposed center for oncology research, dedicated to studying the causes and cures of cancers prevalent in older adults, has yet to be named.

Local Alzheimer's Research-New Hope Through Study

Alzheimer's disease studies at the Institute for Biogerontology Research (IBR) in Sun City provide hope that the use of anti-inflammatory drugs may help control Alzheimer's disease, according to Institute director Joseph Rogers, Ph.D.

The Institute, which is located at the L. J. Roberts Center on the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital campus, is conducting the first clinical trial in the country to test its theory. A small group of Alzheimer's patients in the early phases of the disease will participate in the trial beginning the end of June. They will take controlled dosages of specific anti-inflammatory drugs every day for six months.

The trial was approved unanimously by the Boswell Memorial Hospital Institutional Review Board, comprised of Sun Health board members, area residents, and staff physicians, nurses and administrators from both Boswell Memorial Hospital and Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital in Sun City West.

Board approval was based on significant research developments at the Institute which show that the immune system infiltrates and attacks the brain in Alzheimer's disease. Moreover, anti-inflammatory drugs may reduce the impact of this attack.

"The immune system normally fights disease and infection in the body. It does this by attacking and removing injured or infected tissue. In some cases, however, the attack is unwarranted or overly severe. Multiple sclerosis, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis are likely examples. Alzheimer's may involve a similar abnormal immune mechanism," Dr. Rogers says.

"If we can pinpoint what it is that the immune system is responding to when it attacks in the brain, we may also find the cause of Alzheimer's disease," Dr. Rogers adds.

Canadian scientist Patrick McGeer, Ph.D., of the Kinsmen Laboratory of Neurological Research at the University of British Columbia Medical School in Vancouver, corroborated the findings during joint research studies with Dr. Rogers.

Both the immune system research and the anti-inflammatory drug studies conducted at IBR have appeared in such renowned journals as *Neurobiology of Aging*, *Brain Research*, *Experimental Neurology* and the British Medical journal *Lancet*.

Scientists from all over the world have confirmed much of the promising research at IBR, but "the ultimate test will be if the Alzheimer's patient can be helped," Dr. Rogers says.

"Although our findings are encouraging, it is difficult to say whether the anti-inflammatory drug study will actually help these patients who are participating. We really don't know yet," he stresses.

"Currently, treatment options for Alzheimer's patients simply are not available, so any progress that can be made is a major step for Alzheimer's patients everywhere."

The research findings at IBR are of such international significance that Dr. Rogers has been invited to chair a World Health Organization meeting on aging this fall in Venice, Italy. Twenty of the world's most respected scientists will participate.

Dr. Rogers also has been selected to address or chair Alzheimer's conferences in Milan, Italy, and Kyoto, Japan before year's end.

"With so much available information about aging in this community, I really believe we could conquer Alzheimer's disease if we had a big enough facility to work in," Dr. Rogers says enthusiastically.

Additional community support is needed to help fund construction of a new, single structure that houses specialized centers to combat each of several diseases of aging.

Currently, IBR has 6,000 square feet of research space that includes the L. J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research and the Center for Parkinson's Research. To achieve its goals, IBR must enlarge by 32,000 square feet.

The cost of this expansion is \$4 million, and already \$2 million in contributions have been received by the Sun Health Foundation which is conducting the capital campaign to fund this needed IBR addition. **OVER**

"IBR and the non-profit Sun Health Foundation will dedicate each of the new research centers and facilities within the new building to those donors who contribute to support the vision of treatment and a cure that can make significant research progress possible right here in Valley," says Arthur G. Matthias, president of the Sun Health Foundation volunteer board of trustees.

"Even the Institute itself can be named to reflect the commitment of the donor, trust or corporation willing to make a gift of \$1.5 million or more," Matthias adds.

Funding for the Alzheimer's clinical study that is being conducted by the Institute for Biogerontology Research beginning in June is made possible through gifts given in memory of Robert J. Pielsticker, former president of the Board of Trustees of the non-profit Sun Health Foundation.

Costs for this special project include the purchase of anti-inflammatory drugs and other expenses during the six-month

study, according to Foundation Board president Arthur G. Matthias.

For more information about donation opportunities, call 876-5330.

10

Local researchers link Alzheimer's, immune system

News published in medical journal

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Sun City's Institute for Biogerontology Research may be on the verge of a major breakthrough in its Alzheimer's disease research.

Institute director Dr. Joseph Rogers said preliminary research has shown that two anti-inflammatory prescription drugs — Indocin, an aspirin-like drug, and Prednisone, a steroid drug — used to treat rheumatoid arthritis also may help arrest the progressive mind deterioration of Alzheimer's patients.

Rheumatoid arthritis causes inflammation and swelling of the joints. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, irreversible brain disorder that causes an estimated 150,000 deaths in the United States each year.

Most victims are older than 65, but Alzheimer's can strike people in their 40s. Symptoms include gradual memory loss, impaired judgment, disorientation, personality change, difficulty in learning and loss of language skills. No cause or cure is known.

Rogers said his institute's early research has indicated that rheumatoid arthritics have only one-tenth of the expected incidence of Alzheimer's after being treated with the drugs.

"My laboratory has been working chiefly on the hypothesis that in Alzheimer's disease, the immune system gets into the brain and finds something bad it considers abnormal and then does what the immune system does under those conditions," said Rogers, the institute's research director the past three years. "It attacks the brain and we believe that attack

Clinic to expand, A3

might actually do more damage than whatever the abnormality is."

The two arthritis drugs appear to stem the abnormal reaction of the immune system on the brain.

Rogers, who has studied Alzheimer's disease most of his career, said that early research into the immune system's effect on Alzheimer's doesn't mean it's a cause or that the two arthritis drugs could be a cure.

"But this could be the first meaningful therapy useful in fighting Alzheimer's. We are trying to develop something that for the first time will help patients instead of just standing back and watching them die."

He said the institute's initial research has been corroborated by Dr. Patrick McGeer at the Kinsmen Laboratory of Neurological Research at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and by Dr. John Sibley in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Regina.

They have been attracting worldwide attention after their conclusions on the effects of arthritis drugs on Alzheimer's patients were published last month in the British Medical Journal's Lancet magazine.

Rogers and his staff have received approval from the American Medical Association to launch a six-month study in a couple of weeks using up to 30 Sun City area Alzheimer's patients as subjects. About 15 patients are confirmed so far.

Each patient will be treated with one of the two drugs and

OVER



Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

RESEARCHER — Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the Institute for Biogerontology Research, said the latest finding "could be the first meaningful therapy useful in fighting Alzheimer's. We are trying to develop something that for the first time will help patients instead of just standing back and watching them die."

monitored to see what effect the drugs have on his Alzheimer's symptoms.

"What we're looking to do is see if we get any kind of dramatic improvement or if the patients appear to hold their ground," Rogers said. "I would be very disappointed if we don't at least see that happen."

He said he couldn't ethically

justify a placebo or control group yet. Such a group, where a sugar pill or equivalent is given to some of the subjects, could prove valuable eventually if preliminary results show the drugs are effective.

"I think at this stage we want to be as cautious as possible, although these drugs are in wide use," Rogers said. "We

don't want to endanger anybody unnecessarily."

Qualified early stage Alzheimer's patients who want to participate in the study should contact Rogers at 876-5328.

Rogers also cautioned that six months may be too short a time frame to arrive at any conclusive results since Alzheimer's
See Researchers, A3

Researchers launch 6-month Alzheimer's study

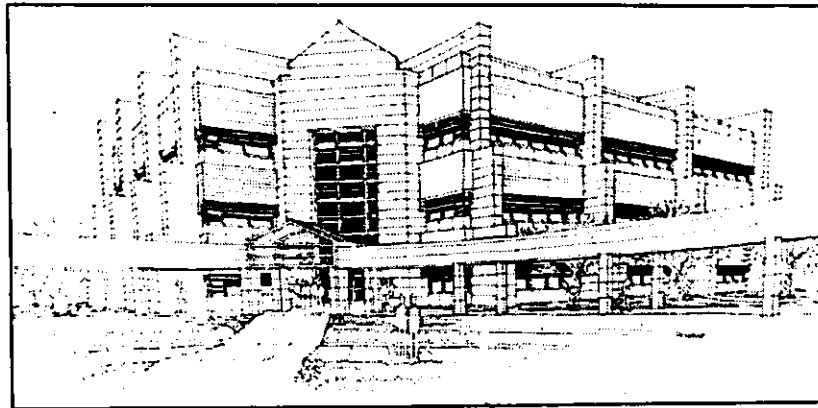
—From A1

on average takes up to eight years from its onset to death. Ideally, Rogers said he would like to monitor 100 patients for a year.

Early research by McGeer, Rogers and Sibley concludes that in rheumatoid arthritis, the body's immune system appears to attack the abnormal inflamed bone joints.

When Indocin, one of the few drugs that crosses over into the brain from the bloodstream or Prednisone or both drugs are taken to treat the condition, it apparently arrests or blunts the attack.

According to McGeer, a detailed review of the charts of 22 patients in British Columbia and Saskatchewan who had both Alzheimer's and rheumatoid arthritis show six cases with onset of dementia, the final stage of Alzheimer's, at ages 62, 66, 79, 86, 93 and 96, many



Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

WILL EXPAND — This is a drawing of the expansion planned for the Institute for Biogerontology Research. It will be just east of the building at 105th Avenue and Santa Fe Drive.

years after discontinuing anti-inflammatory medication.

One rheumatoid arthritis case resulted after the onset of dementia, one case had no history of anti-inflammatory treatment and developed both

diseases by age 79, seven cases had unclear medical records and seven cases involved long-term anti-inflammatory treatment.

"The above data suggest that the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in patients with

Qualified early stage Alzheimer's patients who want to participate in the study should call 876-5328.

rheumatoid arthritis is unexpectedly low and that anti-inflammatory therapy might be the explanation," McGeer said.

"We went through about a million hospital records at Boswell Hospital and four general hospitals in Arizona and Canada and found some rheumatoid arthritis were taking the kinds of drugs we think Alzheimer's patients should be taking," Rogers said. "They had about 10 times less Alzheimer's disease than you would expect in people of that age group.

"Of the ones we found that had both Alzheimer's disease

and rheumatoid arthritis, the vast majority of them were patients who had never taken anti-inflammatory drugs, the kind of drugs we think would be responsible for that difference."

Rogers said a number of local physicians and neuropsychologists will assist the research study, including Dr. Steven Hemplemann, Dr. Louis Kirby, Dr. Pam Wilson, Dr. Alfred Kasniak and Dr. Jim Schultz, a prostate cancer specialist-scientist.

They will specifically monitor mental-status changes in patients with both Alzheimer's and rheumatoid arthritis.

Rogers stressed the study will only involve Alzheimer's patients in the early stages of their disease — people who usually can carry on a normal conversation and score at least a 16 on a Mini-Mental Status Test.

"Typically when you give

them Prednisone, you're hoping to put the patient in remission or they're able to hold their ground. It strikes me that the cruelist thing in the world you could do would be to do something to an Alzheimer's patient in the late stages of the disease to have them hold their ground.

"If we see real dramatic, robust effects, then we will try it with patients who are more advanced," said Rogers, who hopes to at least see a limited regenerative, recuperative nervous system response much like stroke patients who regain some of their bodily functions.

He said that while the nerve cells people are born with can't be replaced, they can be made to grow new connections to take over the dead cells' functions.

Rogers said any Alzheimer's breakthrough is vital since no drug, exercise, diet, social setting or anything else has been proven to help.

Campaign raises funds to begin expansion of Alzheimer's research center in Sun City

A community-wide fund drive is underway in hopes of raising enough money to expand a local Alzheimer's Disease research center.

An anonymous gift of \$1.5 million has recently been given to the Institute for Biogerontology Research (IBR), located on the Boswell Memorial Hospital campus at 13220 North 105th Avenue.

A matching \$1.5 million is needed from the community to launch an expansion of the facility.

To help alert potential donors, a community-wide awareness campaign is now underway. Residents are receiving personal telephone calls to learn more about the IBR and other facilities within the Sun Health Corporation.

Joseph Rogers, Ph.D., has been the director of IBR since its inception in 1986.

A staff of 20 is currently involved in efforts to find cures for Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and cancer. When adequate funds are raised to build a new 38,000-square-foot research center on the Sun Health Corporation campus on Thunderbird

Boulevard, hiring of additional experts will also be possible.

The systematic expansion of IBR will allow the team of doctors and research scientists to accomplish their goals in one main location.

The existing facility will be used entirely by the L.J. Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research. Alzheimer's disease is irreversible and progressively destroys those parts of the brain that are so uniquely and highly developed in humans -- and the ability to intelligently and reasonably function.

Alzheimer's Disease is the fourth-leading cause of death in older adults, striking one in 10 who are over the age of 65.

The new IBR facility will house major research centers for Parkinson's disease, geriatric arthritis, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and diseases which hinder or destroy hearing and vision.

Seven primary and seven support laboratories will complement the research centers plus an administrative center.

IBR now has one of the largest brain tissue banks in the world. Through this program, sufficient

tissue is available for research at IBR, as well as to meet the needs of scientists from more than 40 international research centers.

Through community support of the tissue program, many Sun City residents have played an important role in the search for cures to diseases which often afflict the adult population.

Tissue donations are needed to

assure the continuation of the promising research being conducted. Information about this IBR program may be obtained by calling 876-5328.

For additional information on giving opportunities at the Institute for Biogerontology Research, call Dr. Leonard Gibb at the Sun Health Foundation, 876-5330.

Big plans

\$1.5 million donated for IBR growth

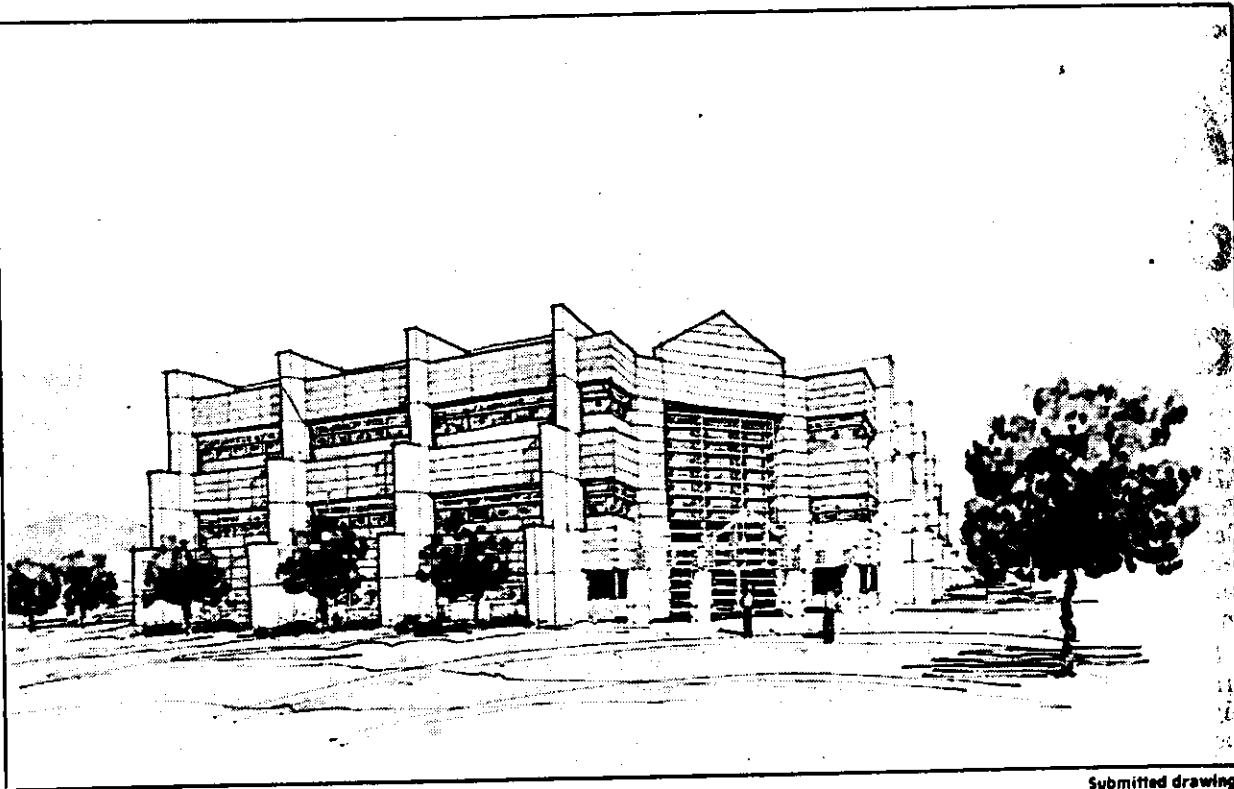
By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — An anonymous local donor has given \$1.5 million to Sun City's Institute for Biogerontology Research to fund research efforts for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

But IBR needs a community donation of at least another \$1.5 million from Sun Cities area residents to expand its research center north of the present IBR site on the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital campus at 13220 N. 105th Ave.

To help alert potential donors, Sun Health Corp. is conducting a community-wide public awareness campaign through personal telephone calls and mailings.

Sun Health and IBR officials say the expansion is needed so the institute can continue to attract more of the nation's top researchers in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases and other afflictions of the elderly.



Submitted drawing

PROPOSED BUILDING — This artist's rendering shows the proposed addition to the Institute for Biogerontology Research, 13220 N. 105th Ave. The three-story building, would house major research centers for Parkinson's disease, geriatric oncology, arthritis, diabetes, cardiovascular and other diseases.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, IBR director since its inception 2½ years ago, said the present facility doesn't have room for additional researchers.

"There are good people who will come here. I came from the Salk Institute; Elliott Mufson (deputy director and head of IBR's division of structural studies) came from the Department of Neurology at Harvard Medical School; and Dan Brady

(staff scientist, division of morphologic studies) came from City of Hope's Beckman Institute in Duarte, Calif."

Rogers said top researchers will come to Sun City's IBR because in 2½ years it has gained a national reputation for Alzheimer's research through the publication of some 30 national medical journal papers.

"We have almost a better national reputation than we do

locally," said Rogers. "Our institute, even though small, is really pretty well-known in research circles because of the work we do with Alzheimer's disease and our tissue program."

"We just don't have the critical mass that we need to have the level of high-powered research that we want here," he said. "The kind of critical mass you need to cure a disease, not See Alzheimer's, A4 OVERS

Alzheimer's institute plans expansion

— From, A1

just contribute toward research."

Rogers will keep his high IBR profile by going to Washington, D.C., next month to give a talk at the National Institute on Aging on the immune system's involvement in Alzheimer's.

"That's something that we have pioneered that has made people sit up and take notice," said Rogers. "Dr. Mufson's work on nerve-growth factors also has received a lot of national attention. That's a chemical messenger used by the brain to signal that some rebuilding needs to be done. It's of great interest in Alzheimer's disease and in the recovery from brain and spinal cord injuries."

Rogers stressed that the in-

stitute needs the \$1.5 million just to build the building, not for actual research. He noted that on-staff researchers have obtained more than \$1.5 million on their own from federal research grants.

"Almost all of the money we've raised so far (for building funds) has come from within the Sun City community and that's where we hope the expansion money will come from," he said. "People in Chicago and New York are going to support their own Alzheimer's people."

He said IBR's research efforts have also been aided through the donation of more than 100 brains of Sun Citians who died with Alzheimer's. Another 80 donor families are signed up.

"That has helped to put our

institute on the map because that tissue is now shared with the best scientists all over the world.

"In two years, we've gotten the largest brain tissue bank in the country," said Len Gibb, Sun Health director of planned giving. "We're sending tissue to more than 20 other research institutes in the world. We just added Spain to the list."

"Rogers has been known to say, 'We may not find the cure for Alzheimer's here but the answers may come from Sun City with the brain tissue donated here,'" said Gibb.

"What may not be fully appreciated around here is that Sun City and Sun City West probably constitute the world's most concentrated Alzheimer's

disease population," said Rogers. "This is the world's most concentrated geriatric population and Alzheimer's occurs with about the same frequency everywhere among elderly people."

"Where you've got the most concentrated elderly population, you've also got the most concentrated Alzheimer's population."

Gibb said the present IBR center is cramped with 20 staff and research people working on Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and geriatric oncology.

More information on the IBR program may be obtained by calling 876-5328 or on IBR giving opportunities by calling Gibb at 876-5330.

Special grant awarded doctor

Alzheimer's mysteries to be studied

By JACQUE PAPPAS
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — For years, doctors and scientists have studied the principles of Alzheimer's disease in an effort to cure the degenerative illness.

And for the next three years, Dr. Daniel R. Brady, staff scientist at the Institute for Biogerontology Research in Sun City, will attempt to unravel some of the mysteries as to why Alzheimer's occurs.

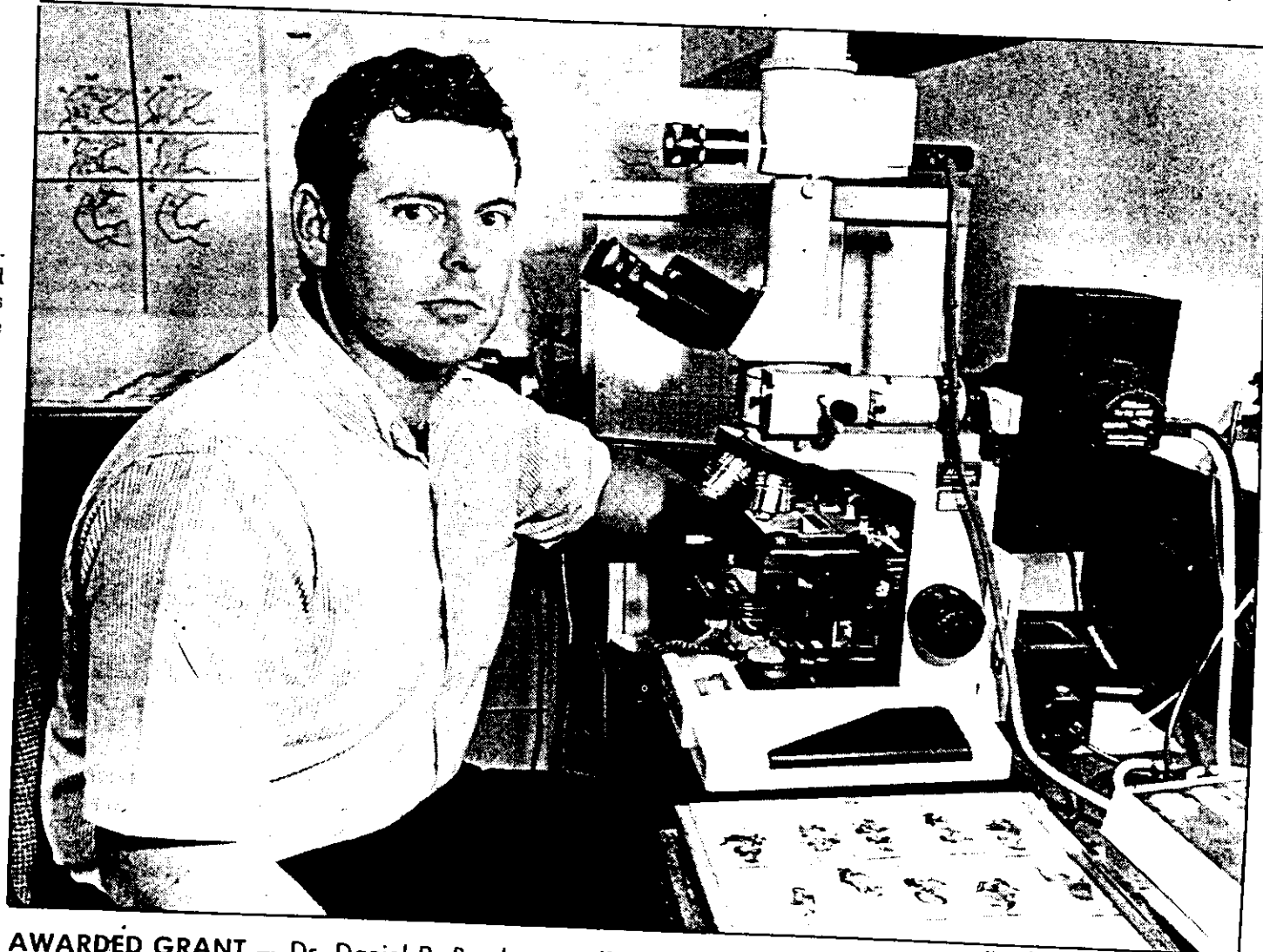
Brady has been awarded a special grant from the Arizona Disease Control Research Commission for his continuing research into Alzheimer's disease.

The \$63,000 grant, which extends over a three-year research period, was awarded to him for his project entitled "Neuropathology of Memory Associated Regions in Alzheimer's Diseased Brains."

Brady said his research will focus on the amygdala — a part of the brain associated with learning and memory that is consistently been shown to be

See Grant, AA8

OVER



AWARDED GRANT — Dr. Daniel R. Brady, a staff scientist in the lab at the Institute for Biogerontology Research in Sun City, has been awarded a \$63,000 grant for Alzheimer's research.

News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherneski

Grant to help in Alzheimer's study

— From AAI

affected by Alzheimer's disease.

"We hope to make great strides in our research developments related to the causes and treatments not only of Alzheimer's disease, but also other age-related disorders such as Parkinson's disease and cancer," Brady said. "The grant will help us do just that."

Brady said he will be studying the principles of organization of the amygdala.

"This is definitely something I hope to be studying for a while. It's not like AIDS in that we know what causes it," Brady said. "Alzheimer's is one of the last frontiers in that we don't know exactly what causes it."

Although there have been many multidisciplinary studies on Alzheimer's, Brady said many of them do not focus on specific structures such as the amygdala.

Brady said he hopes to make connections with the amygdala and its structures that are affected by the disease.

"Arizona is one of the few places that has state support for research like this," Brady said. "The state is a prime place because it's a haven for the elderly. There are an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 Alzheimer's patients in Arizona."

This year, the research commission has awarded about

\$660,000 to 26 individuals at seven statewide research facilities for medical and health research, commission chairman Ted Williams said.

He said the commission is funding 58 research projects in Arizona at institutions such as St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center and the Barrow Neurological Institute.

The commission was established by the Arizona Legislature in 1984 and unique in the nation with regard to its funding of a broad range of medical and health concerns including health promotion and disease-prevention studies.

Funds are made available from penalties or interest on delinquent taxes.

"Arizonans can be proud of the leading role their state has taken in the funding of basic medical and health research," Williams said.

The institute, located at the L.J. Roberts Center, just west of Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital, is a center for clinical investigation into the causes of and treatments for aging and age-related disorders.

In addition to a center for Alzheimer's research, the Institute has centers for oncology and Parkinson's disease.

Dr. Joseph Rogers, director of the institute, said Sun Health



News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

BRAIN TISSUE STUDIED — Dr. Daniel Brady holds a microscope slide of brain tissue used in his research. He says a recent grant will help to make great strides in

research developments related to the causes and treatments of Alzheimer's disease, and other age-related disorders such as Parkinson's disease and cancer.

Corporation formed the center about two years ago to address the needs of the elderly population served in the area.

"They wanted some basic science research to go with the clinical work done at the hospi-

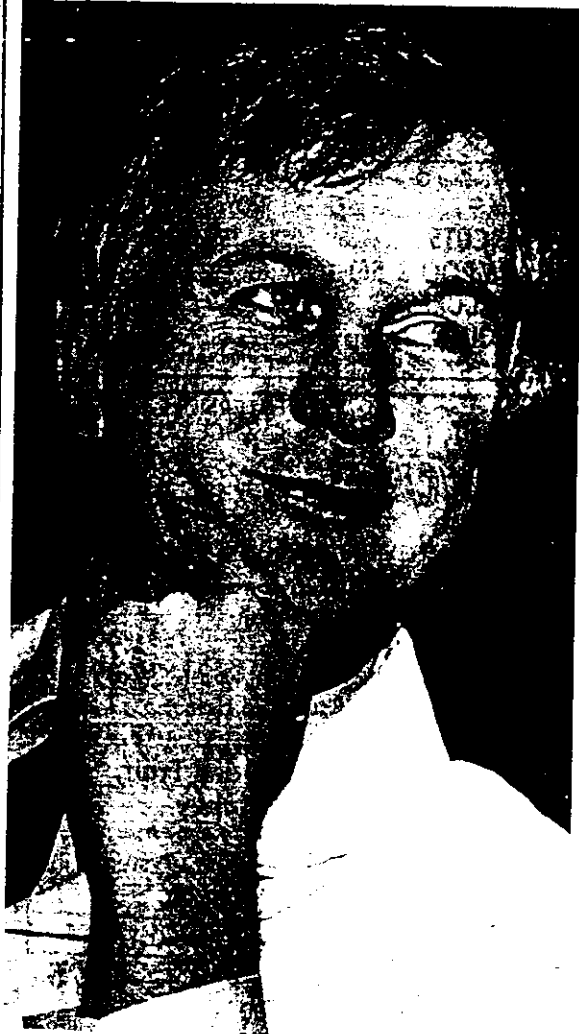
tals," Rogers said. "We have people who treat the disease and have those who find cures for diseases so we don't have them in the first place."

Funds and tissue donations are always needed to further re-

search on age-related disorders.

For more information concerning ways to donate, call Sun Health Foundation at 876-5330.

Free guided tours of the institute are available by calling 876-5328.



DR. JOSEPH ROGERS

Sun City institute looks for clues for Alzheimer's, other aging ills

By BRIAN ALCORN
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — In a temporary building in the shadow of Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital, Dr. Joseph Rogers stalks a killer.

Rogers, the director of the new Institute for Biogerontology Research, said he and his fellow researchers are hoping "another clue will drop out" that will lead them to a cure for Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's, primarily a disease of the elderly, is a degenerative brain disorder which causes memory loss, inability to function and eventual death.

Alzheimer's kills more than 100,000 people every year, but recent research breakthroughs have given scientists renewed hope that an understanding of the mysterious disorder may be within reach.

The institute, which opened Nov. 1, is the only private research laboratory in the country devoted to studying the biological aspects of aging.

Sun Health Corp. started the institute with a \$2 million endowment, and Rogers agreed to leave his posts at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the New England Regional Alzheimer's Center at Harvard University to come to Sun City.

Rogers said he decided to leave Boston academia to lead the institute because experience had taught him that "a privately endowed institute is really a place where you can get a lot done.

"What better place can you think of for an institute that studies aging and age-related disorders?" Rogers asked, noting

that the average age in Sun City is 72. "We've got as good a chance at curing Alzheimer's as anybody, and I hope to see it happen here."

The institute is comprised of six laboratories, which Rogers said he hopes the facility can eventually double. The institute would rival a research department at a major university.

The research center will study the biological aspects of several facets of aging — age-related motor disabilities, vision problems in aging, the cardiovascular system in the elderly and molecular biogerontology.

In the future, Rogers said he hopes the institute will investigate types of cancer that have particular importance to the elderly, such as cancer of the urinary tract. But for now, Rogers said, the main thrust of the institute is the study of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Rogers said the recently announced results of tests that used tetrahydroaminoacidine (THA) to improve the memory of Alzheimer's patients "really look very promising."

But, he added, "it should also be noted that a breakthrough on Alzheimer's is announced on the average of every two years, and the patients continue to die."

Rogers said the results of the THA study, conducted by Dr. William Summers, are surprising since studies using drugs similar to THA have been "miserable failures."

Although he called Summer's findings intriguing, Rogers said "it tells us abso-

lutely nothing about what causes the disease."

Rogers said his work at the institute will focus on finding the causes of Alzheimer's disease, but this research requires a special kind of community support.

Since Alzheimer's does not occur in animals, the institute has to rely on donations of human brain tissue of Alzheimer victims to conduct its research.

"If we don't have the tissue, we're out of business," Rogers said. "The support we ask for is something more generous than money. We ask people to donate the brain tissue of a loved one who has died of Alzheimer's disease."

Rogers said the Sun Cities have been "incredibly supportive" of the institute's efforts to obtain brain tissue.

Rogers said he recently spoke to a local Alzheimer support group, and nearly everyone in the room volunteered to donate brain tissue to the institute.

Fund-raising campaigns have also been successful. Rogers said an average of approximately \$10,000 is donated to the institute each month. These donations are helping to build the center's first permanent facility, which Rogers said should be completed early next year.

Rogers said large and small donations are still needed, though, before construction can begin on a second building at the research center.

"We need a benefactor to buy us a second building, but we need benefactors to buy us a box of rubber bands, too."