Neurology remains the exciting avenue for betterment of the human condition because of its emphasis on the inner workings of the nervous system. Alzheimer’s disease, now a virtual epidemic in this country, illustrates the importance of cognitive function as a hallmark of quality of life.

Roger Kelley, MD
Chair

The combined departments of Psychiatry and Neurology, at Tulane, commenced in 1950. This combination illustrated the importance of the interaction between functional activity of the brain and behavior. However, as both specialties evolved, in terms of assessment and management strategies, the complexities no longer allowed the clinician to bridge both areas in an effective fashion. Textbooks of Neurology, for example, were once quite complete with several hundred pages. Now, however, with the exponential growth of neurogenetics, neuropharmacology, neuroimaging, etc., complete overviews of Neurology require volumes of material. Recognition of the need for increasing sub-specialization in Neurology led to a separate Department of Neurology at Tulane starting on Jan. 1, 2010. This separate department designation has allowed better identification of Neurology services with enhanced strategic planning to address the neurological needs of the medical school and the community. The development of the Department of Neurology at Tulane was very much a reflection of the contributions of Dr. Leon Weisberg and Dr. Ruth Patterson in the training of medical students and Neurology residents, over the years, which led to an outstanding cadre of trainees. Several years ago, the Neurology training at Tulane was recognized as one of the top platforms for our medical students to pursue an academic career in Neurology in the country. The present department reflects the contributions of a number of former, and present, faculty who provided outstanding teaching, patient care and research. The late Dr. Benjamin Seltzer was a well recognized leader in cognitive neuroscience while Dr. Antonio Stazio was a valuable resource in the multiple sclerosis realm. Dr. Sarala Palliyath provided considerable expertise in neuromuscular disease. Dr Debra Elliott (Davis) was well recognized for her expertise in Headache management while Dr. Michael Wall has become internationally recognized in Neuro-Ophthalmology. Present members of the Department, including Dr. Jeff Nicholl in Epilepsy and Dr. Morteza Shamsnia in Clinical Neurophysiology/Sleep Medicine, continue to make great contributions to the Department.

Highlights for the 2013-2014 academic year

Designation of Tulane University Hospital as a certified Comprehensive Stroke Center under the directorship of Sheryl Martin-Schild, MD, PhD.

Designation of affiliated hospital, Lakeview Regional Medical Center in Covington, Louisiana, as a certified Primary Stroke Center under the directorship of Ramy El-Khoury, MD.

Expansion of Clinical Neurology services at the Interim Hospital of Louisiana (ILH) with an inpatient General Neurology Service within the past year under the direction of John Freiberg, MD.

Co-Directorship of the Neurorehabilitation Unit at Tulane University Hospital - Lakeside under the supervision of Ramy El-Khoury, MD.

Development of a Headache Center under the directorship of Maike Blaya, MD.

Recruitment of former Tulane Neuro-Medical resident, Aimee Aysenne, MD, as Director of a new Neurocritical Care Unit at Tulane Hospital and Clinic in collaboration with the Tulane Department of Neurosurgery.

Accreditation for an ACGME approved fellowship in stroke.

Highlights continued on back of page...
Highlights for the 2013-2014 academic year continued

Recruitment of Kristy Lafaye, MD, to provide enhanced expertise in neuromuscular disease and to direct the neurology component of the Tulane HEAL-X PhD medical education program.

Recognition of Maike Blaya, MD, for an Owl Club award for her outstanding teaching efforts as the Director of the Neurology Clerkship for Tulane medical students.

Recognition of Drs. Sheryl Martin-Schild and Ramy El-Khoury as stroke directors of the Louisiana Emergency Response Network (LERN).

Ongoing clinical research in acute stroke and stroke prevention with recent designation as an NINDS collaborating center in stroke clinical trials.

Department of Neurology faculty
Roger E. Kelley, MD
Stroke, General Neurology, Headache, and Dementia
Morteza Shamsnia, MD
Clinical Neurophysiology, Sleep Medicine, and General Neurology
Jeff Nicholl, MD
Epilepsy and Neuro-psychiatry
Angela Traylor, MD
Neuro-psychiatry and General Neurology
Sheryl Martin-Schild, MD, PhD
Stroke/Neurocritical Care
Maike Blaya, MD
Headache and Migraine Specialist
Ramy El Khoury, MD
Stroke/Neurocritical Care
Aimee Aysenne, MD
Neurocritical Care/Stroke/Head Trauma
John Freiberg, MD
Stroke, General Neurology
Kristina Lafaye, MD
Neuromuscular Specialist
Patricia Colon, MD
Clinical Neurophysiology, General Neurology
Jessica Kraker, MD
Epilepsy, General Neurology
Digvijaya Navalkele, MD, MPH
Stroke

The Neurology residency program includes three categorical positions per year, as well as one Neuro-Medical residency position per year which requires 2.5 years of Neurology and 2.5 years of Internal Medicine training. The Neurology residency Program Director is Dr. John Freiberg. The department has been accredited for a stroke fellowship training program.