

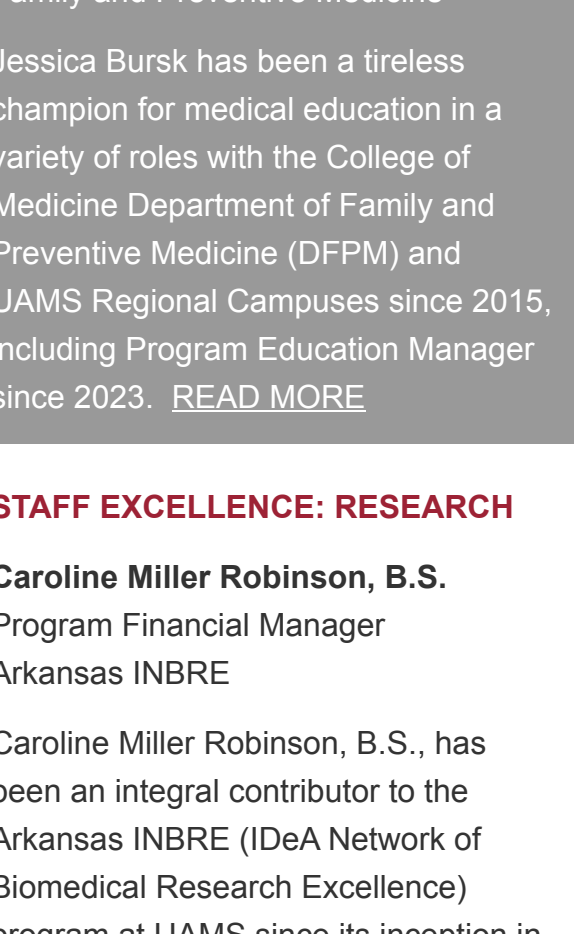
## CONGRATULATIONS, HONOREES!

### COM Dean's Honor Day 2024

The College of Medicine celebrated the excellence of faculty and staff at the annual Dean's Honor Day ceremony on April 16, presenting awards for teaching, clinical care, research, administration, humanism and service, and recognizing faculty members who are receiving promotion and/or tenure in 2024.

The ceremony culminated with the presentation of the Dean's Distinguished Faculty Service Award to **Eduardo R. "Eddie" Ochoa Jr., M.D.**, a Professor in the Department of Pediatrics who has strived to improve the health and quality of life of children in Arkansas and nationally since joining the faculty in 1999. In addition to pediatrics-focused leadership, Dr. Ochoa's service has included impactful roles such as helping the college identify and select promising future physicians as a multi-term member and Chair of the college's medical student admissions committee. [READ MORE](#)

**PROMOTION & TENURE |**  
[Watch the video tribute to Associate Professors.](#)  
[Watch the video tribute to Professors, Distinguished Professors and Emeritus Faculty.](#)  
[Download a list of the 2024 P&T honorees.](#)



*Nominator Chenia Eubanks, M.D., MPH (left) presents a commemorative art glass bowl to Eduardo Ochoa Jr., M.D., (right). Dr. Eubanks also was an honoree, receiving the Clinical Excellence Award for Service & Professionalism.*

**Watch the video recording of the Dean's Honor Day ceremony here.**

### Meet the Honorees!

[Read about all of the 18 additional faculty and staff members who received awards at the Dean's Honor Day ceremony here](#), or click on the read-more links for each honoree below to go directly to their profile.



**STAFF EXCELLENCE: EDUCATION**  
**Jessica Burck**  
 Program Education Manager  
 Family and Preventive Medicine  
 Jessica Burck has been a tireless champion for medical education in a variety of roles with the College of Medicine Department of Family and Preventive Medicine (DFPM) and UAMS Regional Campuses since 2015, including Program Education Manager since 2023. [READ MORE](#)



**STAFF EXCELLENCE: RESEARCH**  
**Caroline Miller Robinson, B.S.**  
 Program Financial Manager  
 Arkansas INBRE  
 Caroline Miller Robinson, B.S., has been an integral contributor to the Arkansas INBRE (DeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence) program at UAMS since its inception in 2001, helping the program build a statewide research infrastructure that serves as a pipeline for future and emerging biomedical scientists. [READ MORE](#)



**STAFF EXCELLENCE: CLINICAL**  
**Chris Cathcart, DPT, MBA**  
 Physical Therapist  
 Trauma Program  
 Chris Cathcart, DPT, MBA, has been an indispensable member of the UAMS Trauma team for over a decade, bringing his expertise in physical therapy and compassion to countless patients with complex injuries. [READ MORE](#)



**STAFF EXCELLENCE - ADMINISTRATION**  
**Robin Rogers, B.A.**  
 Associate Chair, Finance and Administration  
 Biomedical Informatics  
 Robin Rogers, B.A., has been crucial to the growth of biomedical informatics programs at UAMS as the administrative leader for a team of over 50 researchers and other personnel in the Department of Biomedical Informatics (DBMI). [READ MORE](#)



**GME EDUCATOR - PROGRAM COORDINATOR**  
**Angela Warr**  
 Program Coordinator  
 Pain Medicine Fellowship  
 Angela Warr has worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the UAMS Pain Medicine Fellowship since its inception in 2019, bringing exceptional dedication to her role as program coordinator. [READ MORE](#)



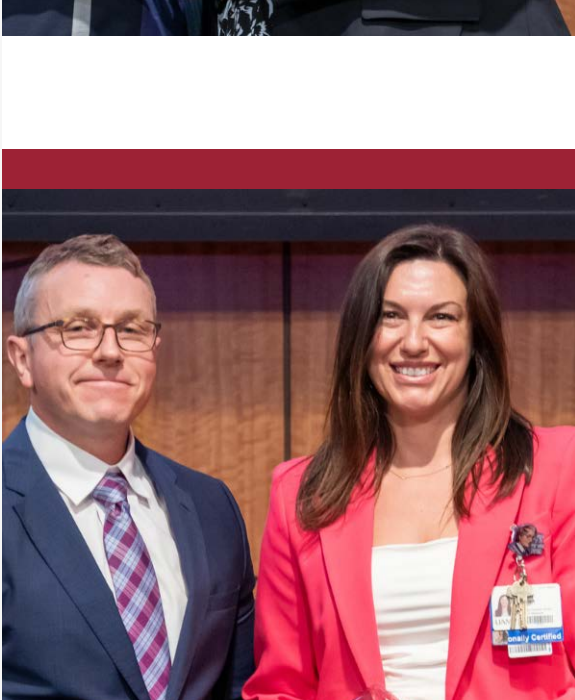
**GME EDUCATOR - PROGRAM DIRECTOR**  
**Priya Mendiratta, M.D., MPH**  
 Program Director, Geriatrics Medicine Fellowship  
 Professor, Geriatrics  
 Priya Mendiratta, M.D., MPH, has trained, mentored and inspired many geriatrics fellows as program director for the Geriatrics Medicine Fellowship – along with a wide range of other learners as vice chair for education and clerkship director in the Department of Geriatrics. [READ MORE](#)



**MASTER TEACHER**  
**Steve Schexnayder, M.D.**  
 Professor, Pediatric Critical Care Medicine  
 Executive Vice Chair, Pediatrics  
 Steve Schexnayder, M.D., has strived to enhance medical education for students, residents, fellows and faculty in the Department of Pediatrics and College of Medicine for over two decades, exemplifying the characteristics of a "master teacher." [READ MORE](#)



**EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION**  
**Ahmed Abuabdou, M.D., MBA**  
 Associate Professor, Internal Medicine  
 Chief Clinical Officer, UAMS Medical Center  
 Ahmed Abuabdou, M.D., MBA, implemented an innovative elective experience for resident and fellow physicians called System-Based Practice that goes beyond the curriculum of most programs. [READ MORE](#)



**EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**  
**Karen Dickinson, MBBS, M.D., MBA**  
 Assistant Professor, Surgery  
 Director of IPE Simulation and Clinical Skills Training  
 Karen Dickinson, MBBS, M.D., MBA, brings exceptional passion and enthusiasm for surgical education scholarship, along with significant expertise in the field, to UAMS. [READ MORE](#)



**LEONARD TOW HUMANISM IN MEDICINE**  
*Presented by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation*  
**David Kelley, M.D.**  
 Associate Professor, Family and Preventive Medicine  
 Director, DFPM Division of Undergraduate Education  
 Co-Course Director, Practice of Medicine II  
 David Kelley, M.D., joined the faculty in 2022 and has quickly gained respect and appreciation as an outstanding physician and educator who exemplifies humanism. [READ MORE](#)



**EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH**  
**Lorraine McKelvey, Ph.D.**  
 Professor, Family and Preventive Medicine  
 Developmental Psychologist, Research and Evaluation Division  
 Lorraine McKelvey, Ph.D., has made substantial scholarly contributions relevant to social determinants of health and the development of children from high-risk backgrounds as a leading researcher in the field. [READ MORE](#)



**CLINICAL EXCELLENCE - OUTSTANDING ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDER**  
**Ashley Wilson, DNP**  
 APRN Nurse Practitioner  
 Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery  
 Ashley Wilson, DNP, APRN, has provided exceptional care for complex pediatric cardiac patients at Arkansas Children's while making important contributions to clinical research and education. [READ MORE](#)



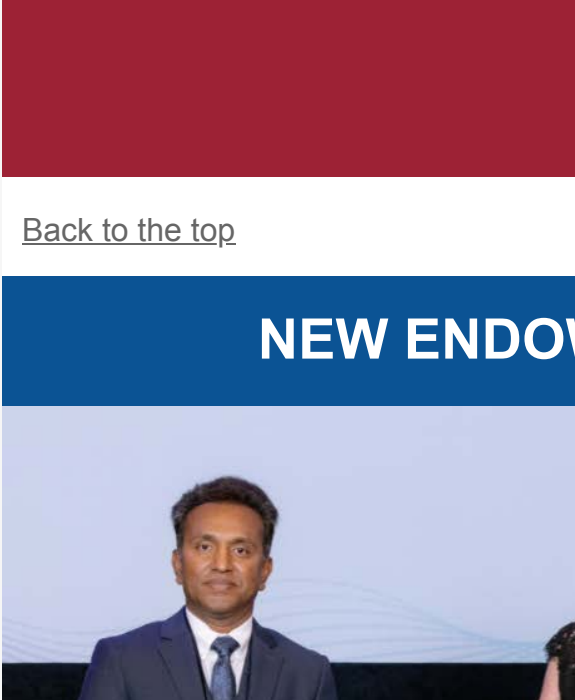
**CLINICAL EXCELLENCE - QUALITY & SAFETY**  
 Assistant Professor, Family and Preventive Medicine  
 UAMS West Regional Campus  
 Tabasum Imran, M.D., has championed best practices, achieved exemplary performance on clinical outcome measures, and implemented tools and processes to improve patient experience at UAMS West in Fort Smith since 2011. [READ MORE](#)



**CLINICAL EXCELLENCE - SERVICE & PROFESSIONALISM**  
**Chenia Eubanks, M.D., MPH**  
 Associate Professor, Pediatrics  
 Section Chief, Community Pediatrics  
 Chenia Eubanks, M.D., embodies compassionate leadership and dedication to the betterment of children in Arkansas, inspiring the colleagues she leads in the Section of Community Pediatrics. [READ MORE](#)



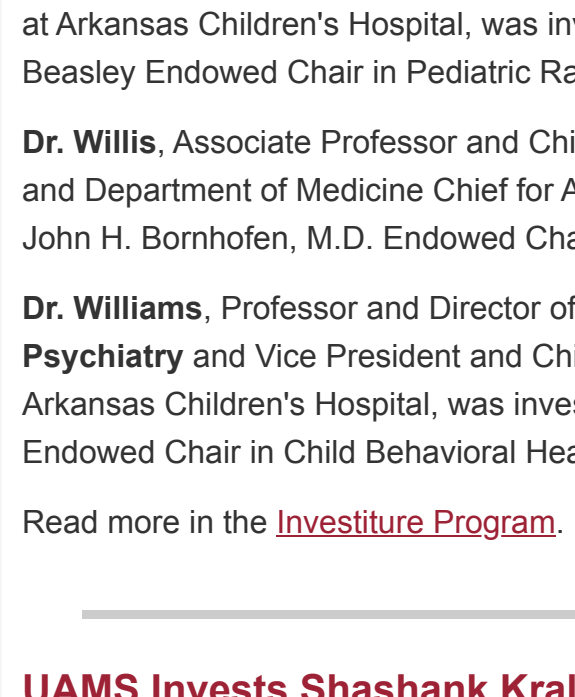
**CLINICAL EXCELLENCE - BEST CONSULTING PHYSICIAN**  
**Sarah Cobb, M.D.**  
 Assistant Professor, Pediatrics-Child Neurology  
 Director of Neonatal Neurocritical Care  
 Sarah Cobb, M.D., embodies the qualities of an ideal consulting physician with extensive clinical expertise as a neonatal neurologist, exceptional communication skills and a collaborative spirit. [READ MORE](#)



**CLINICAL EXCELLENCE - COLLABORATIONS & TEAMWORK**  
**Lyle Burdine, M.D., Ph.D.**  
 Associate Professor, Surgery  
 Director, Solid Organ Transplant Surgery  
 Lyle Burdine, M.D., Ph.D., has fostered an environment of collaboration at UAMS Medical Center and around Arkansas to ensure that transplant patients receive the comprehensive, coordinated care they need. [READ MORE](#)



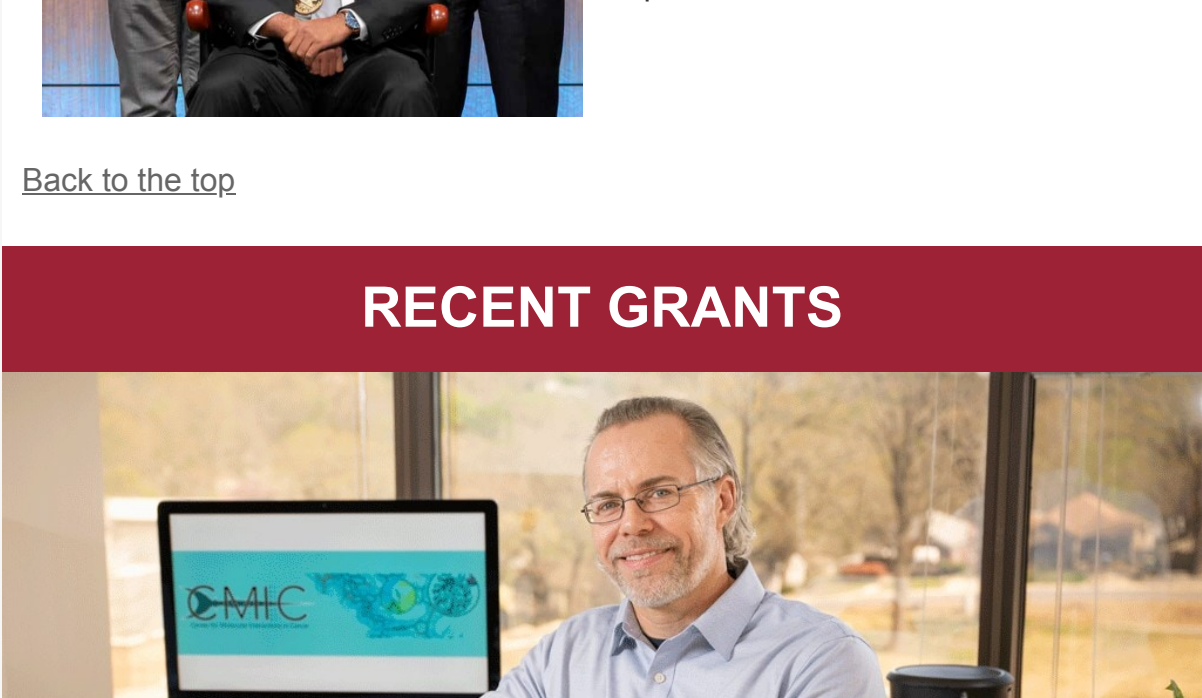
**CLINICAL EXCELLENCE - RISING STAR**  
**Dinesh Edem, M.D.**  
 Distinguished Professor, Internal Medicine-Endocrinology  
 Director, Medical Weight Management  
 Dinesh Edem, M.D., is providing compassionate care for Arkansans struggling with obesity while gaining national recognition as an expert in endocrinology, diabetes and obesity. [READ MORE](#)



**CLINICAL EXCELLENCE - PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR**  
**Ronda Henry-Tillman, M.D.**  
 Professor and Executive Vice Chair, Surgery  
 Division Chief, Breast Surgical Oncology  
 Ronda Henry-Tillman, M.D., is a nationally and internationally renowned breast surgical oncologist, leader in the Department of Surgery and UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, and devoted champion of patients in Arkansas and around the world. [READ MORE](#)

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## NEW ENDOWED CHAIRS



### Arkansas Children's Holds Spring Investiture Ceremony

Congratulations to COM faculty members (shown above, from left) **Raghu Ramakrishnaiah, M.D.**, **V. Erin Willis, M.D.**, and **Jason Williams, Psy.D., M.S. Ed.**, on their investitures in endowed chairs by Arkansas Children's on April 24.

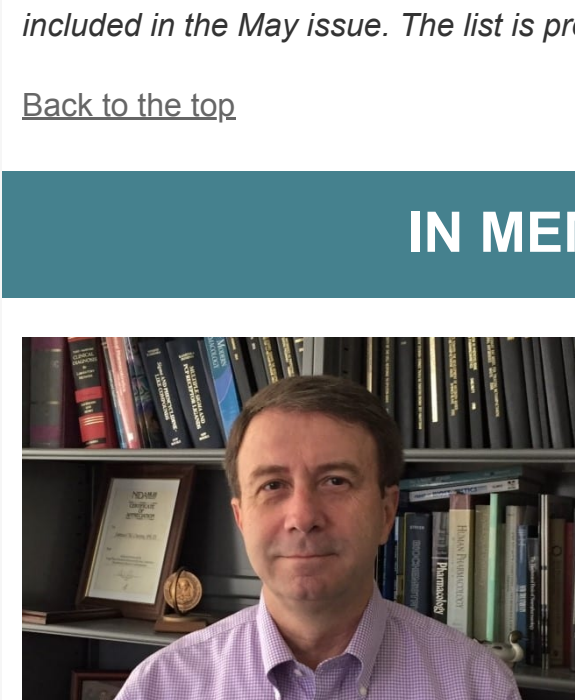
**Dr. Ramakrishnaiah**, Professor of Radiology and Chief of **Pediatric Radiology** at Arkansas Children's Hospital, was invested in the Lee Roy and Melba T. Beasley Endowed Chair in Pediatric Radiology.

**Dr. Willis**, Associate Professor and Chief of the Division of **Pediatric Neurology** and Department of Medicine Chief for Arkansas Children's, was invested in the John H. Bornhofen, M.D. Endowed Chair in Child Neurology.

**Dr. Williams**, Professor and Director of the Division of **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** and Vice President and Chief Mental and Behavioral Health Officer at Arkansas Children's Hospital, was invested in the Belinda H. And Robert L. Shults Endowed Chair in Child Behavioral Health.

Read more in the [Investiture Program](#).

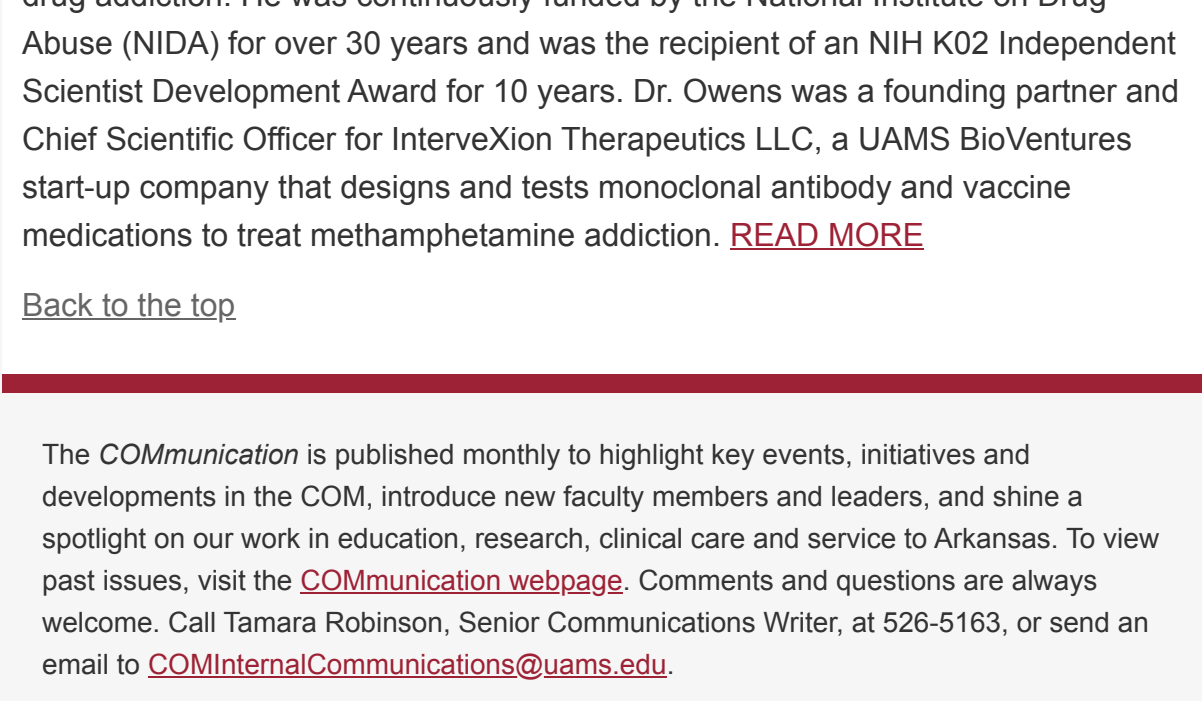
### UAMS Invests Shashank Kraleti, M.D., in Garnett Chair



Congratulations to **Shashank Kraleti, M.D.**, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of **Family and Preventive Medicine** and Director of the Primary Care and Population Health Service Line, on his formal investiture in the Dr. Algernon Sidney Garnett Chair in Family Medicine on April 10. [READ MORE](#)

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## RECENT GRANTS



**EXPLORING MOLECULAR DRIVERS OF CANCER | Robert Eoff, Ph.D.**, Professor of **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, is leading UAMS' newest Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE), the **Center for Molecular Interactions in Cancer (CMIC)**. The UAMS **Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute** received a five-year, \$11.48 million grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences to establish the center. [READ MORE](#)

**CMIC Pilot Projects: Request for Applications**  
 The UAMS **Center for Molecular Interactions in Cancer (CMIC)** is accepting applications for one-year pilot project grants of up to \$75,000 for basic or translational research projects. The College of Medicine is providing funding for this program, which will offer two awards annually. **Applications are due by June 15.** [Download the RFA](#) for more information.



**ESTROGEN'S ROLE IN PREVENTING BONE LOSS | Maria Schuller Almeida, Ph.D.**, Professor in the Department of **Internal Medicine**, Division of **Endocrinology and Metabolism**, and the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery**, and **Ha-Neui (Hans) Kim, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor in **Endocrinology and Metabolism**, are Co-Principal Investigators on a new five-year, \$2.27 million R01 grant from the NIH National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS). Their team will study the cellular mechanisms used by estrogen to prevent bone loss and osteoporosis. [READ MORE](#)

*A list of additional grants received by COM faculty in March and April will be included in the May issue. The list is provided by the COM Office of Research.*

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## IN MEMORIAM



**S. Michael Owens, Ph.D.**  
**S. Michael Owens, Ph.D.**, Professor Emeritus in the Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology**, died April 16, 2024. Dr. Owens joined the faculty in 1985 and retired in August 2019. He held many leadership positions while at UAMS including Director of the Center for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Studies from 2000 until his retirement.

He also served as Director of Graduate Studies in 1993-1999; Founding Director of the Arkansas Biosciences Institute in 2001-2002; and Interim Chair of Pharmacology and Toxicology in 2004.

Dr. Owens devoted much of his time to groundbreaking research aimed at fighting drug addiction. He was continuously funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) for over 30 years and was the recipient of an NIH K02 Independent Scientist Development Award for 10 years. Dr. Owens was a founding partner and Chief Scientific Officer for Intervexion Therapeutics LLC, a UAMS BioVentures start-up company that designs and tests monoclonal antibody and vaccine medications to treat methamphetamine addiction. [READ MORE](#)

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The *COMMUNICATION* is published monthly to highlight key events, initiatives and developments in the COM, introduce new faculty members and leaders, and shine a spotlight on our work in education, research, clinical care and service to Arkansas. To view past issues, visit the [COMMUNICATION webpage](#). Comments and questions are always welcome. Call Tamara Robinson, Senior Communications Writer, at 526-5163, or send an email to [COMInternalCommunications@uams.edu](mailto:COMInternalCommunications@uams.edu).