Moulton pairs law, public health expertise to influence health policy

Sandy Moulton has graced the pages of dozens of publications, including The New York Times, Washington Post, Newsweek, Reader's Digest and Southern Living.

She’s not showing off the latest fashion designs—she’s telling people how to get life-saving medicines. As executive director of the Patient Access Programs Foundation for pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), she is in charge of programs that give away more than $1 million worth of GSK drugs daily to uninsured, low-income patients. GSK has run ads, featuring Sandy, to let people know about the programs. “I have the greatest job in the company,” she says.

Moulton was one of the first UNC School of Public Health students with a law degree. In the 1970s, many women lawyers struggled to reach partner—or even get jobs—in private law firms, so Moulton took a different tack.

“With so much emphasis on health policy, the combination of law and public health degrees is common now,” she says, “but when we started (she and two law school classmates), it was quite unusual.”

As a staff attorney in the N.C. Department of Human Resources in the 1980s, she influenced the future of the state’s health care policy by re-codifying public health laws that hadn’t been revisited for half a century or more.

In 1989, she went to work for Glaxo Inc. (now GlaxoSmithKline). The company had just pledged $5 million over five years to help the state fight infant mortality. As part of that program, Moulton and Marilyn Foote-Hudson, director of what is now the GlaxoSmithKline Foundation of North Carolina, started the “Glaxo Child Health Recognition Awards.” These honors have been presented annually since 1994 to local health departments, staff members and individuals in the community who have developed innovative programs to address some aspect of child health. The idea was to identify and share best practices.

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Moulton has been leading GSK’s patient assistance programs for more than 10 years. She also is on the UNC School of Public Health Foundation Board, is a mentor in the School and, with husband Dr. Thomas Wong, is a scholarship donor and funder of renovations to a Rosenau Hall office.

“Many people at this school have encouraged me throughout my career,” she says. “It’s wonderful to have opportunities to give back.”

—BY RAMONA DURBOS

Dr. P. LaMont Bryant likes making an impact on people’s lives. From dominating the field as captain of the football team at N.C. Central University, to conducting groundbreaking research as a graduate student working at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to being the renowned Public Health professional he is today, Bryant is a leader, dispensing solutions and inspiration along the way.

He chose to focus on public health, he says, because that’s where he felt he could make the biggest difference. “If you really think about what drives us all, it’s not our fact sheet or our budget sheet but our overall health,” says Bryant, who got his PhD in environmental sciences and engineering at Carolina’s School of Public Health in 2000.

“Once you’ve lost your health, you’ve lost it. It’s our most precious semi-renewable resource, and I want to help manage it.”

Today, Bryant is manager of regulatory affairs at Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc., a Johnson & Johnson company that develops and markets advanced medical devices for minimally invasive and open surgical procedures. Before that, he held several global leadership positions at Procter & Gamble (P&G), where he received many leadership awards, including the Rising Star Award for business contributions in 2005 and a Power of You Recognition Award for “building the organization” in 2007.

Dr. Ron Webb, retired manager of documentary operations, says that having a mentor can quickly assess a problem, break it down into multiple work components, then make timely and concrete business decisions, says Webb.

Webb adds that aside from being an outstanding team player who easily motivates people, Bryant is an excellent manager. “LaMont can quickly assess a problem, break it down into multiple work components, then make timely and concrete business decisions,” says Webb.

Bryant, who’s managed some of the largest consumer health care brands in the world, credits much of his success to the intellectual and collaborative learning environment at Carolina and the breadth of courses he took as a graduate student. He says that having a doctoral degree from a highly regarded environmental-sciences and engineering program helped him secure key leadership positions in some of the most influential health care companies in the world, but adds that it was his actual experience within the doctoral program that enabled him to excel in his career.

“Interacting with top-level students and professors from various countries who came to Chapel Hill for a common goal, engaging in open dialogue with them, and generally just being part of an environment that comes up with solutions and fosters growth…there are tons of ways UNC helped me build on skill sets I possess,” says Bryant. “Being around excellent people constantly inspires you to be excellent in all things at all times.”

—BY MARGARITA DE PANDO

Sandra Moulton, executive director of GSK’s Patient Access Programs Foundation, started her public health career at the N.C. Department of Human Services. One of the first programs was helping expand the state’s mandatory vaccination requirements to include cats. After the bill passed, she remembers a legislator thanking her on behalf of his grandchildren, who adored kittens. Moulton earned a master’s in public health from UNC and is vice president of the Public Health Foundation Board at the School.