



Ann C. Bonham, Ph.D.

As the chief scientific officer for the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) since 2009, Dr. Ann Bonham has helped make AAMC a consistent, bold, robust and collaborative voice for medical research. She has been a stalwart advocate for innovative training models for biomedical researchers through training grants for basic and clinician scientists.



At AAMC, Dr. Bonham directs the organization's array of programs that support all aspects of research and training. As the primary AAMC contact for external research organizations, she addresses policy issues affecting research through engagement with key officials in the public and private sector. She also works closely with AAMC's constituents to address their research and research training needs, and represents the association in forums such as VA's dealing with research policy and administration.

“Our constituents and partners need to know that the AAMC cares about the full range of biomedical research,” she said recently. “I intend to listen and engage perspectives from all our constituents and stakeholders, from the biggest to the smallest institution, from the most research-intensive to the least research intensive institutions.”

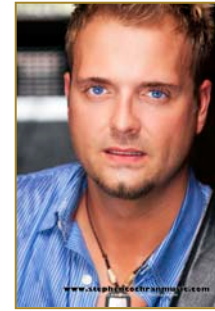
Dr. Bonham has identified a major issue and challenge facing academic medicine as recruiting, retaining, and training a diverse biomedical and health research workforce. She believes we must expand the definition of “translational research” to encompass the full range of scholarship aimed at improving human health, from fundamental discovery to clinical and health outcomes research to research targeted towards the social determinants of health.

Before becoming chief scientific officer, Dr. Bonham was executive associate dean for academic affairs and professor of pharmacology and internal medicine at the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine. During her tenure, the school of medicine's overall federal research funding increased by almost 60 percent. Bonham earned her doctoral degree in pharmacology from the University of Iowa College of Medicine in 1986.

Over the next few years, Dr. Bonham believes there will be an increased emphasis on accountability in medical research. “The public is going to demand transparency and assurances in how we are conducting ourselves in research, and I think the AAMC has taken a lead in that,” she told an interviewer. “This is an exciting time to be part of biomedical and health research.”

Stephen Cochran

At the 2010 VA Research Forum, country music artist Stephen Cochran and his band premiered a music video of a song called “Hope.” The song, which Mr. Cochran co-wrote with Mark Melloan, has helped spread the word throughout the nation about the discoveries and innovations VA Research is using to turn hope into reality for America’s veterans.



Cochran’s ties to VA Research and its accomplishments come from personal knowledge. As his country music career was just getting off the ground, the events of September 11, 2001 occurred. Immediately, he did an about face, and joined the United States Marines. He advanced to the elite Light Armored reconnaissance division and headed straight to Iraq. He returned safely as Recon Scout Team Leader, but wasn't so lucky on his next tour of duty in Afghanistan. While on security patrol for a convoy, Cochran was injured just outside of Kandahar.

Cochran awoke a month later to find himself in the Bethesda Maryland military hospital with his back broken and was paralyzed from the waist down. Cochran was facing living the rest of his life in a wheelchair as doctors of Walter Reed and Bethesda were planning to fuse his fragments in his back together. A nurse instead suggested using an experimental procedure called kyphoplasty, but the procedure was not without risk. The Nashville VAMC was contacted for a second opinion. Doctors at the VAMC, in partnership with Vanderbilt University Medical Center, performed the experimental procedure. The procedure was a success and Cochran began walking the road of recovery.

“I can say that I am walking because of VA research and development,” he recalls. “What the VA did was put together a team, just for me. They realize that every veteran is different. They looked at my situation and made an attack plan for it, and we are still fighting together today. My development and progress has been amazing and I owe it to the great team I have in Nashville.”

Back on his feet, Cochran exploded onto the country music scene in 2007 with a critically acclaimed, self-titled debut album that captured the hearts of fans, critics, and a lot of everyday heroes. In October 2009, he and his band, the Stephen Cochran Project, recorded ‘Hope.’ and the video, which a choir of veterans performing the song at various VA locations.

The Stephen Cochran Project keeps a busy schedule of touring, recording and most importantly building a loyal fan base. At every turn Cochran has taken time and leveraged his celebrity status to benefit his fellow veterans through organizations that provide help to returning veterans. Cochran has played countless benefit shows for organizations like the Semper Fi Fund that help raise funds for severely wounded veterans. Through his efforts, Cochran has helped transform lives and raise funds through his music.

Colonel Gregory Gadson

In May, 2007, Gregory Gadson was a battalion commander for the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division in Iraq. He was in a convoy returning from a funeral for two soldiers from a sister battalion when an improvised explosive device exploded nearby.



“I remember a violent explosion, and then I realized that I had been ejected from the vehicle. I knew that I was not in good shape,” he recalls. “Soon afterwards, I lost consciousness.” As a result of the explosion, Colonel Gadson lost both of his legs above the knee, and suffered severe damage to his right arm.

“I was able to take the loss of my legs in stride,” he now says. “But dealing with the injuries in my right arm proved more difficult, as I am right handed. Intellectually and emotionally, I was down to one limb. That didn’t fill me with very much optimism. But slowly, I was able to accept what happened to me. That was the biggest hurdle in my recovery.”

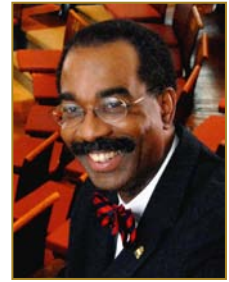
Colonel Gadson, who has served in the Army for more than 20 years as a field artillery officer and taken part in every major conflict of the past two decades, quickly committed himself to maintaining a positive outlook and recovering to the best of his ability. He learned that sharing his optimism with others who were wounded helped them, too, to overcome the challenges they faced.

The Colonel believes, however, that his injuries are not the important part of his story. Instead, he focuses on future accomplishments. He currently serves as Director of the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program, and is responsible for ensuring that the program’s Soldier and veteran advocates are given the best training and resources available to support wounded service members and veterans.

“I think our organization is really about helping Soldiers and veterans find their path to independence,” he said recently. “We don’t want to create dependency, rather we want to make it easier for Soldiers and their families to live their lives. When I was first appointed as director, I told my boss that I took the job because I wanted to make a difference – not just in a tactical way, but if there is some lasting good or a change that we can make, I want to do that.”

A 1989 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, COL Gadson holds Masters Degrees in Information Systems from Webster University and Policy Management from Georgetown University. He also holds Doctor of Laws degree from Webster University. COL Gadson is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and an Army War College Fellow from The Institute of World Politics, Washington, D.C.

E. Albert Reece, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., FACOG



Even in a profession filled with overachievers, it would be difficult to find a busier, more productive health care practitioner and administrator than Dr. E. Albert Reece. Dr. Reece is the Vice President for Medical Affairs of the University of Maryland; the University's John Z. and Akiko Bowers Distinguished Professor, and is a professor in the University's Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Medicine, and Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

"I enjoy leadership," he has said. "It gives me an opportunity to have a direct, yet comprehensive impact on health care not only from a clinical perspective, but also by focusing on research."

Despite his administrative responsibilities, Dr. Reece remains actively involved in research and education. His research focuses on diabetes in pregnancy, birth defects, and prenatal diagnosis. He directs an NIH-funded research laboratory group studying the bio-molecular mechanisms of diabetes-induced birth defects. His group is now studying the molecular mechanisms of these changes and methods to prevent birth anomalies. Earlier in his career, Dr. Reece and his colleagues developed the technique of embryofetoscopy for early prenatal diagnosis—and eventually curative fetal therapies based on such diagnoses.

Dr. Reece is a strong advocate for sustained funding for biomedical research. "As our elected representatives grapple with ways to fix (the economy)," he has written, "we must remind them that investing in the nation's biomedical research enterprise...is a proven economic engine that creates high-paying, sustainable jobs while improving our Nation's health. A number of studies have conservatively estimated a 15-to 20-fold return for investments in biomedical research in the United States."

Originally from Jamaica, West Indies, Dr. Reece received his medical degree from New York University and did his medical residency at Columbia University. He later served a clinical fellowship from Yale University, where he subsequently became a faculty member. He also earned a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica, and an MBA from the Fox School of Business at Temple University. In 2006, he was recruited by the University of Maryland to serve in his current capacity. In 2010, Dr. Reece served as Acting President of the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

He has published extensively in the scientific literature, including 12 medical textbooks; 5 monographs; and more than 500 journal articles, chapters, and abstracts. He is a member many prestigious national scientific organizations, including the Institute of Medicine and the American Association of Medical Colleges Council of Deans.

Gregg Zoroya



The impact of American involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been felt not only on the battlefields, but also on the home front—by the men and women who have served and returned; by the families of those who have deployed; and by countless others across the Nation.

In 2005, USA TODAY created a new beat to cover that impact. The beat was called Home Front, and staff writer Gregg Zoroya was selected to cover it. Mr. Zoroya's beat focuses on war's impact on those who wage it—emphasizing such consequences as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, joblessness, suicide and family struggles.

Zoroya's byline is very familiar to those in the military and veterans communities. He has doggedly pursued information on suicide rates among service members and veterans; the Department of Veterans Affairs' claims backlog; mental health issues relating to service in combat; and compensation issues. Recently, he wrote a powerful story based on an interview with a U.S. Army general in which the General warned, from his own personal experience, of the dangers service members and veterans face of dependency on narcotic pain relievers.

Gregg began his USA today career thirteen years ago, working initially as a human-interest feature writer and a general assignment reporter. After September 11, he volunteered for war coverage duties, and was sent to Pakistan and Afghanistan as early as late 2001. When he returned, he split his reporting duties between features and general assignment tasks and war-zone coverage. He traveled to Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza to cover the intifada in 2002.

Weeks before the Iraq war began, in early 2003, Zoroya was granted a visa by Saddam Hussein's government, and visited Baghdad. He returned to Baghdad a few months later with lead elements of the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division, the first U.S. troops to enter the city during the Iraq invasion by U.S.-led coalition forces. In all, he has traveled into the Iraq and Afghanistan war zones 14 times, either to cover specific events such as the first elections in both countries, or to write on topics such as the effect of multiple deployments on troops or advances in military medicine.

Zoroya was born in Omaha, Neb., and raised outside of Milwaukee, Wis. He graduated from the School of Journalism at the University of Kentucky.

Before coming to USA Today, he worked for a series of newspapers in Southern California, the last of which was the Orange County Register, where he was legal affairs writer. In a departure from that assignment, he deployed as an embedded reporter with the United States Marines to Somalia for several weeks beginning a few days before Christmas, 1992.