

## Three Honored at Commencement

With caps, gowns and exponential thinkers in abundance, the world of medical and scientific research increased its ranks on May 15, as the graduate school awarded 46 advanced degrees, including 43 master's or doctoral degrees and three doctoral degrees to students from the combined M.D./Ph.D. program. Since its beginning in 1969, the GSBS has conferred more than 900 degrees.

Presiding over the ceremony, GSBS Dean Dr. Cary W. Cooper presented special awards.

Richard D. Bukoski, professor in internal medicine and physiology and biophysics, received the Distinguished Faculty Research Award, selected by off-campus judges and presented to a faculty member whose research has made an impact on a broad field of science, or whose work shows ingenuity and originality in the application of novel techniques to an important



*William D. Willis Jr., M.D., Ph.D., received his second Graduate Student Organization Distinguished Teaching Award. Willis was first named to the honor 20 years ago.*

area of science. His discovery and the ongoing development of new hypertension drugs offer promise for new therapies for the disease.

"I urge you to embrace the manic feelings you experience when you get a new idea, take it into the lab, test it, and learn that it is true," he advised the graduates. "I believe it is this excitement that drives many scientists and serves as a fuel to new discoveries."

Dr. William D. Willis, Jr., director of the Marine Biomedical Institute and chairman of the Department of Anatomy and Neurosciences, received the Graduate Student Organization Distinguished Teaching Award for a second time, presented to the professor who, by student vote, is considered to have contributed most toward academic growth and development. The recipient is chosen on the basis of teaching skills, tutorial excellence, and the overall quality of and enthusiasm for graduate teaching.

Addressing the audience, Willis, who holds the Cecil H. and Ida M. Green Chair in Marine Science, stressed the importance of having a mentor.

"A good mentor can be recognized by a good reputation for training skilled researchers," he said. "A test of this is the quantity of papers the mentor has co-authored with trainees and how the trainees have fared in their later careers."

Dr. Kenneth C. Carter, President of International Genetics Associates, Inc. in Maryland, received the Distinguished Alumnus Award, presented to a past graduate who has achieved special recognition in his or her professional career. He is one of the world's leading experts on genetic mapping, having contributed significantly to the theory that disruption of DNA repair processes is an early event in development of colon cancer.

"You have been provided one of the best biomedical sciences education available anywhere," Carter told the graduates. "UTMB has prepared you for the challenges that lie ahead. These fundamental skills will help you in whatever path you take."

Following the awards presentation, President John D. Stobo conferred the advanced degrees, ushering students into a new phase in their careers. Although these students depart in different directions, they leave with confidence knowing UTMB prepared them for the many challenges the future may bring.

—Alicia Simmons



*Richard D. Bukoski, Ph.D., professor in internal medicine and physiology and biophysics, received the 1999 Distinguished Faculty Research Award.*



*Kenneth C. Carter, Ph.D., President of International Genetics Associates, Inc., was named the Graduate School's 1999 Distinguished Alumnus.*