

## Preventing FAC

"We were on a roll, but now we have to catch up," explained Scott Black in his and Robert Bratton's continuing efforts to make the public aware of fetal alcohol syndrome. First year residents in Family Practice, Black and Bratton have found it more difficult this year in devoting time they would like to this important venture.

In August, 1988 the two UK medical students effectively presented to the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council the findings that fetal alcohol syndrome is the number one cause of preventable birth defects. In fact, it occurs in one of every 1,000 births. They asked the Council to require businesses that sell alcohol to display signs warning pregnant women of the dangers of drinking. The Council approved unanimously. The signs, "Warning, Drinking Alcoholic Beverages During Pregnancy Can Cause Birth Defects," were promptly posted.

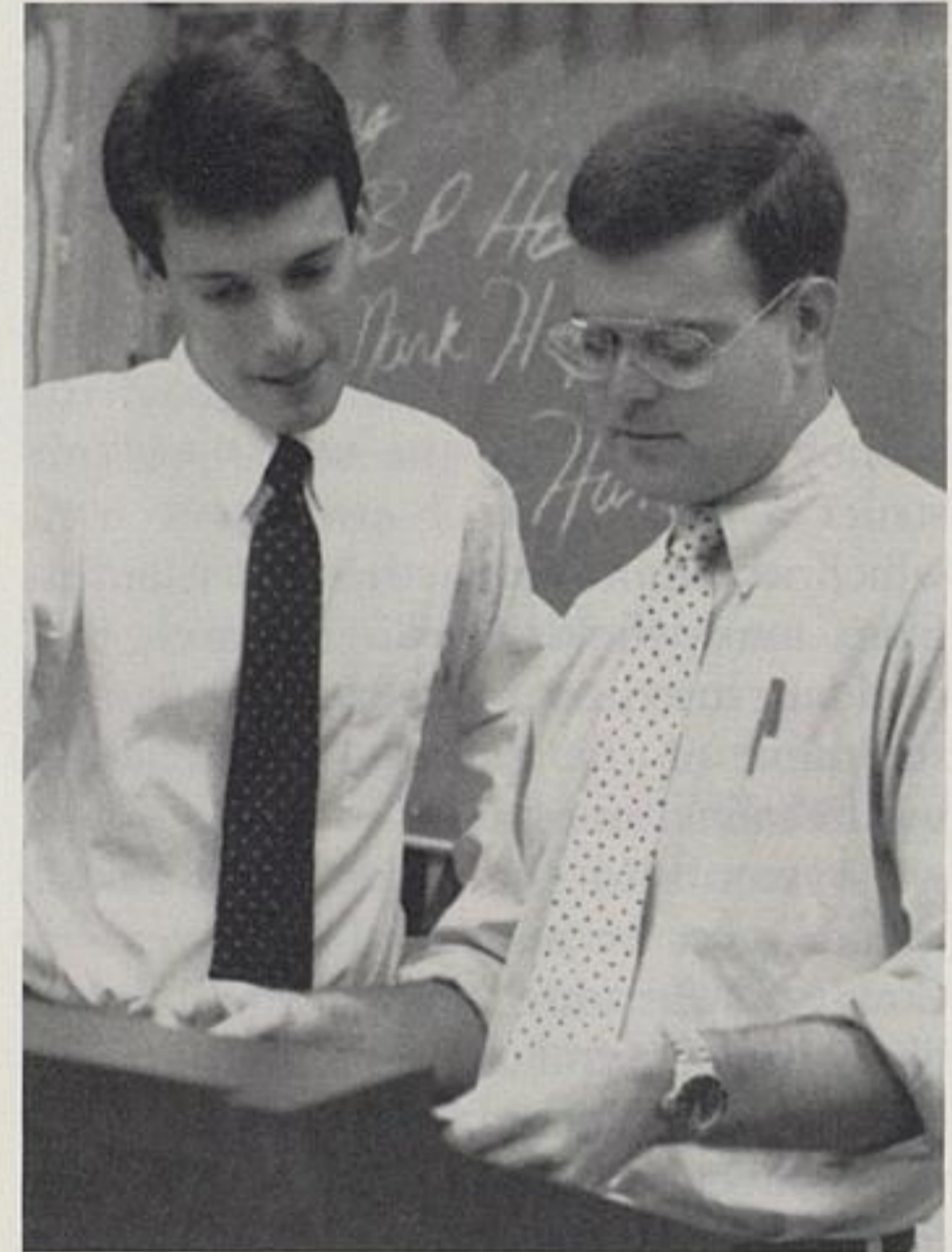
"It felt really good walking into a restaurant and seeing those signs and knowing we had worked on that. A poll done in New York, after signs were posted there, showed awareness increased nearly 20 percent almost immediately. Whether that translates into decreased fetal alcohol syndrome or not, people certainly are more aware now," Black said.

Additional benefits occurred when the federal government recently required that warnings be posted on cans and liquor containers. This had previously met with strong resistance.

A priority of Black and Bratton is to seek the help of Kentucky physicians in this effort. They contacted several physicians early last Spring and sent patient information to them which was well received. They plan to send pamphlets and more information to additional physicians soon.

Currently, New Jersey is considering using the Black and Bratton awareness program as a model for legislation in that state. Clearly these two UK medical students have been an example to others.

Some have questioned whether Kentucky's infants suffer from fetal alcohol syndrome, but Black is more sure than ever. "I have been even more attuned to this preventable problem since being in pediatric rotation this last year, and personally seeing two cases just since this summer. It is out there."



Scott Black and Robert Bratton



The Great Teachers for 1990 are pictured with Susan Mountjoy, chairman of the Great Teacher Committee. They are: James Force and Wilford Bladen, both from the Lexington campus; Denis Morrow, Elizabethtown Community College; Charles Howes, Ashland Community College, and Kevin Felton of Hopkinsville Community College. Great Teacher Awards have been presented annually by the Association since 1961.