

# #GettingToKnowDOS— Dr. Peter Neligan



In this issue, *Surgery Synopsis* staff interviewed Dr. **Peter Neligan**, Professor & Chief, Center for Reconstructive Surgery in the Division of Plastic Surgery, for #GettingToKnowDOS.

**SS:** What was the last book you read?

**PN:** The last book I read was a biography on Leonardo da Vinci. It was very interesting—there were so many things I didn't know about him. He was very flamboyant and very handsome. He liked to wear rose-colored jackets and things like that. But of course the big takeaway from the book was that he was way ahead of his time.

**SS:** Do you mostly read biographies? **PN:** I read everything—biographies, garbage, thrillers. **SS:** What is the most “garbage-y” book you've read recently? **PN:** I don't know if this qualifies, but I recently read “Gone Girl.” It was a really good mystery/thriller. One of the most fun books I have is a coffee table book on the artwork of Ronnie Wood of The Rolling Stones. He's done some amazing art work on The Stones. There's one piece I really like that completely captures Jagger's swagger—it's just perfect. There's another piece that's the study of Charlie Watts' hands. Charlie Watts holds his hands in a particular way and he managed to capture that really well.

**SS:** Any favorite recent movies?

**PN:** There are a couple different categories of movies I watch. There are the movies I like to watch at home with a glass of wine, then since I travel a lot there are “airplane movies.” Those are the movies where you can fall asleep then wake up and you didn't really miss anything. One I want to watch that's getting a lot of hype right now is “Crazy Rich Asians.” **SS:** Is that an airplane movie or a sit down with a glass of wine movie? **PN:** Maybe both. Sit down with a glass of wine and watch it during a flight [laughs]. **SS:** Do you have any favorite movie genres? **PN:** No, but I can say I don't like “artsy-fartsy” movies. **SS:** Why is that? **PN:** Because they're fartsy; they're too pretentious.

**SS:** What music are you currently into?

**PN:** I love all kinds of music but I particularly like blues. One of my favorite artists is Eric Clapton. I also like to play music, which I don't think many people know. I play electric and acoustic guitar and also piano. I've been playing ever since I was a kid and am bringing up the next generation of musicians with my grandsons. **SS:** Are they liking it or is this something that grandpa is forcing them to do? **PN:** The little guy likes it, the three year old, but the five year old couldn't care less.

**SS:** Did you ever play in a band? **PN:** I played in a band when I was in medical school, but I can't remember what it was called. It was a pretty crap name, I know that. And more recently I played with a band a couple years ago when I was invited to the Italian Microsurgical Society. In the invitation letter they asked me to give the titles of a couple of lectures I wanted to give, and because they knew I played guitar, a couple of songs I wanted to sing. They rented a nightclub and we had such a good time. **SS:** What did you play? **PN:** I played some blues—Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Clapton. Then this past year at the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery one of the lectures who is a surgeon from San Francisco has been in a band for 30 years and he played and I also got to jam with him.



Neligan's jam session at the annual American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery meeting in January 2018

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**SS:** Do you collect anything?

**PN:** Guitars, I have six. **SS:** Do you have a favorite?

**PN:** They are all favorites! I tend to go to two—one electric and one acoustic—but I do play them all.

**SS:** Do you have any pet peeves?

**PN:** Slow drivers. And people who don't move forward in a line-up like waiting for a coffee and such, or in a line of cars. When I see that I just want to pull in right in front of them!

**SS:** Do you have a favorite travel destination?

**PN:** My very favorite place in the whole world is the British Virgin Islands. It's totally laid back, it's unpretentious, and it's just a very chill place. You feel relaxed the moment you arrive.

**SS:** What is a cherished goal or accomplishment from last year?

**PN:** A professional accomplishment from the last year that I'm most proud of is finishing the 4th Edition of Plastic Surgery. It's a 6 volume set and took about two years. It's been translated to Portuguese, Spanish and they are finishing the Chinese edition. It's amazing to have a book published in a language you don't even speak.



Neligan with the 6-volume Plastic Surgery textbook set

**SS:** What would you do if you weren't a surgeon?

**PN:** I'll tell you, the two things I've always wanted to be when I was growing up and that I still find appealing: an airline pilot and the other is an architect. **SS:** Those are very different. What appeals about each occupation? **PN:** For the airline pilot I think it would be the experience and fun of controlling such a big machine as well as the speed and of course the travel. As for architecture, there is something very appealing to me about designing and building something from start to finish. **SS:** Do you design or build anything such as furniture or anything like that? **PN:** No, but I do feel that design is kind of used in plastic surgery. It's designing and building but on a much smaller scale.

**SS:** What's an interesting fact about yourself that many people don't know?

**PN:** I like to cook. I grill everything whether it's meat, vegetables, whatever—I grill almost every day.

**SS:** What's your personal motto?

**PN:** It would be something along the lines of "Stay calm and get things done."

**SS:** Do you have a favorite Seattle restaurant?

**PN:** My favorite Seattle restaurant is Ray's Boathouse, I love that place. It's not particularly amazing food and it's a very ordinary place, but I just love the ambiance, the view and the fact that it's not at all stuffy. I hate stuffy places. It might not fit into the category of "top restaurant" but it is one of my favorite places.

**SS:** Do you have any guilty pleasures?

**PN:** I don't have any guilty pleasures, only regular pleasures. I don't feel guilty about any of them [laughs]

**SS:** What's a phone app you can't live without?

**PN:** There are lots of them actually. I check my email every few minutes on my phone. I like Facebook—I don't post a lot but I like it to keep in touch with people. There are some financial ones I use a lot. And one of my new favorite apps is Marco Polo, which is a video-messaging app. You can send a video message to those who have the app and my wife and I use it with our grandkids a lot. There's a 3-hour time difference so

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when I get home they'll already be in bed so I'll send them a message through Marco Polo. Something like "Hi guys! I just got home. I hope you had a great day," then the next day they will send me one back.

**SS:** Any crazy adventures or stories while traveling?

**PN:** How about traveling with an outdated passport?

**SS:** What?!?! **PN:** One time I went to the British Virgin Islands and when we were leaving I realized my passport was out of date. It ran out like two days before we went on the trip. **SS:** They let you in with an expired passport? **PN:** We were flying into St. Thomas which is the U.S. Virgin Islands and you didn't need a passport. Then we got onto the ferry to go to the British Virgin Islands thinking we were going to be turned back but they didn't even notice. **SS:** What about going back into the U.S.? **PN:** Oh, that wasn't a problem.

**SS:** What attracted you to plastic surgery?

**PN:** It was pure accident, actually. I was planning to be a family physician. In 1975, my wife and I were in the same class in medical school and we were just about to graduate. The next part of our schooling would have been an internship at the same hospital, but the hospital's Chairman of

the Board called us into his office and told us it had come to the board's attention that we were a couple and that one of us would have to leave to do internship because the board won't tolerate a married couple on its intern staff. My wife and I decided that I would be the one to go and I did my internship at two other hospitals—6 months medicine and then 6 months surgery. When I was doing my six month surgical internship I was at the only hospital in Dublin that had a plastic surgery service so it was the busiest service in the hospital and no one wanted to do it so I got stuck with it. Two weeks in and that was all it took.

## this or that

Hot or cold weather? **Hot**

Sweet or savory? **Savory**

Savory—Crackers or chips? **Crackers**

iPhone or Android? **iPhone**

Tablet or Desktop? **Tablet**

Tea or coffee? **Coffee**

Text or call? **Text**

Cats or dogs? **Dogs** (Neither really but if I have to choose one it would be dogs)

Movie or book? **Book**

Mountains or beach? **Beach**

Cardio or Weights? **Cardio**

Big Party or Small Gathering? **Small Gathering**

Facebook or Twitter? **Facebook**

Online Shopping or Shopping in a Store? **Shopping in a Store**

At a movie: Candy or Popcorn? **Popcorn**

Pancakes or Waffles? **Neither one but if I have to choose it would be pancakes**

Movie at Home or Movie at the Theater? **Movie at home**

City or Countryside? **City**



Neligan with his wife in 1971 (above) and in 2018 (below)