

Surgery News

DR. HUGH FOY RETIRES

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DIVISION OF TRAUMA,
BURN, & CRITICAL CARE SURGERY



In the words of one former trainee, "I love Dr. Foy! I'm happy for him that he's retiring, and I'm sorry for resident education. He's a wonderful guy and has shaped my outlook on life. There are so many great stories and memories..."

Dr. **Hugh Foy**, Professor, Division of Trauma, Burn & Critical Care Surgery, will be retiring at the end of August 2019. They say nobody is irreplaceable, that the world won't come crumbling down once an individual leaves. Yet, the world of medical education, mentorship and teaching at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) Department of Surgery (DOS) will be less vibrant without the humor, compassion, involvement and energy infused into its students, trainees and faculty by Dr. Foy, as he has done with such impact for the past forty years. We can hope he might be one of those academic faculty

who become Emeritus but still spend time mentoring, teaching and collaborating. Sometimes the successful formula for the retiree is to pick one aspect of their job that ignited the most passion during their career years; be it clinical work, research or teaching, and devote oneself wholly on a volunteer basis to that endeavor. *"You'll never be bored or lonely while remaining in the environment you've always cherished."* The collective communities who know and love Hugh can only hope that his future endeavors find him perpetually interwoven into the fabric of teaching and mentorship at UW...but this is a selfish contemplation. So let's get on with it!

Hugh Martin Foy was born in a small town on the Nebraska/Colorado border and grew up in Scottsbluff, Nebraska just across the boundary from Wyoming. He graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in 1978, then completed his General Surgery Residency at the University of Washington (UW) in 1983. He remained at UW to pursue a fellowship in burn and surgical critical care then worked for five years at Pacific Medical Center where he served as Surgery Education Director. He's been a member of the UW faculty since 1984 and an attending surgeon at Harborview Medical Center (HMC) since 1990.

Since 2001, his involvement as the Head of the Wind River College in the UWSOM captured and utilized his immense talents as an educator. He was chosen because of his recognized excellence in teaching and the opportunity the position offered for medical students at UW to experience his mentorship. He works intensely with students and has become a sought after clinical mentor by students, residents, fellows and faculty at all levels. Hugh has also remained a mentor, friend and colleague to dozens of previous residents and fellows that have rotated on his service at HMC. He is warmly acknowledged in the annual chief resident banquets as an outstanding educator and mentor, and his educational outreach extends far beyond his university peers and out into the physician and lay communities where he is frequently involved in grass roots activities and educational events.

Dr. Foy is one of those unique individuals who is able to reach across the entire continuum of medical education with amazing insight, effective delivery and perceptive inspiration to optimize the learning experience of each individual in our diverse community. His commitment to teaching within the UWSOM led to the significant acknowledgment of the medical students choosing him repeatedly to be their graduation speaker. His legendary ability to teach residents in the clinic, operating room and on rounds as well as his commitment to the University, outreach through the Alumni Association and through multiple educational programs including trauma, infectious disease and challenging abdominal processes, have brought him accolades and awards that are indeed befitting and well deserved. Hugh will be greatly missed.

We have asked the world of alumni, past students and present colleagues to share stories and memories of Dr. Foy. We hope you enjoy the humor and great appreciation for Dr. Foy's humanity embedded in these heartfelt tributes.

"I remember meeting Hugh as a resident and admiring his positivity and joy, I helped in his training and admired his commitment and dedication, and, for the last 30 years I have worked as a colleague and admired his love of life and family, commitment to his patients and friends and dedication to teaching and mentoring. Hugh truly enjoys and is interested in his fellow human and as an educator he is a shining light to the many over the years. I will miss him and his humility and humanity. We will miss his wisdom and sharing. He knew when you can't put 'lipstick on a pig' and how to support and care for someone in need. Truly, thank you Hugh for the memories." – Ron Maier, MD

"My memory of Hugh is the way he used to start the day with the applicants for residency positions in surgery when he was the Program Director. I had just become a new chair in the department and I was trying to soften the image that Seattle had among applicants...here comes Hugh to wish everyone good morning and he stands there, looks at everyone in the eye and then says

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"I admire you...I admire you because I see that as applicants to our residency program you are the equivalent of infantry soldiers volunteering at a time of war..." I wanted to cry..."

– Carlos Pellegrini, MD

"I have a clear memory of Hugh Foy as a resident at Harborview in the late 70's and 80's. He's one of those residents who changed from the resident, Hugh Foy, to HUGE Foy as a faculty member over the years."

– Patch Dellinger, MD

"StinkFlipper" Story

"I hope someone has the details of the "stinkflipper" story. I may have the details wrong, but Hugh had the recurrent story of one of his patients, a native Alaskan American, who told him the about the native delicacy of "stinkflipper." Apparently, the dorsal fin of a whale was preserved, buried in the snow all winter to allow it to ferment, and later dug up as a delicacy. Hopefully someone has more details than I am able to recall, but it seemed to be one of Hugh's favorite stories."

– Mark Meissner, MD

"If it was easy, you could do it in a parking lot in Puyallup with a tin can and a rock."

– Lisa McIntyre, MD

"After every single trauma code, you call Hugh to let him know about the critical condition of the patient and the question he always asks is: what about the bowel tones?"

– Martin Montenovo, MD

"When I was a chief resident, I woke up in the morning with a wry neck and couldn't really move without pain. When I came in to work, Dr. Foy recognized this immediately, got me in to see someone in the sport and spine clinic, took me over there, then made me lie down and rest while he went to pick-up my prescriptions. Just an example of his boundless compassion."

– Sam Mandell, MD

"There are some truly great Foyisms out there...Here are a few that immediately come to mind (best imagined/repeated/impersonated with Dr. Foy's earnest and distinctly Midwestern locution):

This here is a classic case of those famous last words/Back where I'm from these things always started with the old saying/As they say in the old country: Hold my beer, watch this.



Anything involving the words "clostridial endotoxin" in the setting of NSTI, followed by Dr. Foy conveying the urgency of the situation by using the image of the "gallows dropping" out from under the patient.

Referencing the "Old-time Code of the Hills" as it pertains to leaving a long Prolene marking stitch at the proximal end of a Hartmann's pouch to facilitate a future colostomy takedown.

Dr. Foy is a tremendous trauma surgeon, mentor, and, most importantly, a stellar human being."

– Jason R. Hurd, MD, CPT USAR MC, UW Vascular Surgery Fellow

"Hugh and I have known each other for nearly 40 years. We were residents together in the early 1980's. I was in medicine, Hugh in surgery, and following residency, we were colleagues in clinical care at HMC for about the last 30 years. Hugh is one of the finest physicians and human beings I have had the pleasure to know. Hugh has a boundless interest in humanity which is evident in his care of, and for, patients. Over the years, whenever I referred a patient to Hugh, he would always uncover some interesting aspect of the patient's life story that I had either never known or had forgotten. His technical expertise and medical knowledge were matched by his respect for and curiosity about everyone which he came in contact. He has been a superb teacher of students, residents, fellows, and colleagues throughout his career. He is the embodiment of two adages I first heard in medical school, "the best surgeon is an internist who operates;" and Frances Peabody's famous statement, "the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient." So, in the early 2000's when we were launching the UWSOM College Program, Dean Ramsey and I felt that Hugh was the perfect candidate to serve as the Head of the Wind River College. When I approached him one day after work in the HMC parking garage to describe the program and ask that he consider the job, he gave it some thought and then agreed. Over the last

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18 years scores of students have benefited from his participation, as have all of the faculty who have been part of the Colleges. Beyond his dedication and his profound contributions to the medical school, Hugh has been a tireless advocate for the care of the underserved, and for advancing the goal of universal health care for all Americans. I look forward to continued friendship with Hugh in retirement, and to hearing about his ideas and activities. He is a genuine renaissance man and a remarkable human being."

– Erika Goldstein, MD, Professor Emeritus, General Internal Medicine, Founding Director of the UW School of Medicine College Program

"I always enjoyed listening to Dr. Foy on rounds in the ICU. I am pretty sure each patient was either a relative, friend or friend of a friend. He truly epitomizes kind, patient and empathetic care."

– Annie Menard TSICU RN

"I appreciate your acknowledgement of my cluttered mind, like your grandparent's attic.

(Directed at medical student during anorectal case) "Do you know what fisting is?" Dr. Foy goes on to explain that Basque shepherders castrate lambs with their teeth. This medical student, needless to say, did not go into surgery!

Anaerobes—"helpful in the casket or in the garden"

– Cordelie Witt, MD, General Surgery Chief Resident

"If you put 4 knots in silk your patients bleed less and you sleep more"

"What were the bowel sounds? (about every patient)"

"Does he/she have gallstones? (also about every patient)"

– Gabriel Wallace, MD

"Dr. Foy was the first attending to ever provide encouragement, interest, and investment in me at UW. He is one of the few who takes the time to get to know the interns and welcomes them warmly. His example positively impacted me and I will pay it forward in my career."

– Lacey Lagrone, MD

"I have known Dr. Foy for over 8 years now in the DOS. I have always found him to be nice, sincere, helpful and genuine. It has been a pleasure working alongside him. Thank you Dr. Foy for all the years, months, days, hours, minutes and seconds you have given in helping others. You will be greatly missed."

– Ann Haven, Program Operations Specialist, Harborview Medical Center, Department of Surgery

"Dr. Foy: Where are you from?"

Patient: (Enter any US city)

Dr. Foy: Oh! I know a great little diner around there."

– Karen Zemplenyi, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery R1

"Hugh Foy is the worldwide expert on the best locations to pee in Seattle. He took me on a personal tour of these locations and it was a 5 star tour!" – Marty Schreiber, MD

"Dr. Foy loves people. I admire his ability to connect with patients, students, colleagues and staff in such a warm, funny and thoughtful way. And he remembers. He remembers the stories, the touching and humorous details that remind us what it means to be human. I truly appreciate the generosity he has shown to me as well as my family."

– Julie Calcavecchia, Director, ICM & The Colleges, UWSOM

"I love Dr. Foy! I'm happy for him that he's retiring, and I'm sorry for resident education. He's a wonderful guy and has shaped my outlook on life. There are so many great stories and memories...I won't do any of it justice, but here are a few:1. "Call me a recovering burn surgeon." I quote him weekly when I'm in the OR with that line."

2. "We were in the middle of a full trauma code and the nervous medical student was staffed with putting a Foley catheter in. The guy prepped and draped as he was supposed to do. He put on sterile gloves. He then proceeded to hit the catheter on everything. He completely contaminated the Foley placement. Foy walked up to the guy and put his arm around him and said, "I really appreciate your willingness to help, but what part of the germ theory don't you buy into?" Then he went over sterile Foley placement with the student."

3. "I consider bowel tones an important part... no, check that...I consider bowel tones the most important part of a physical exam."

4. "A case got cancelled and he said, "Well let's just call it a stay of execution."

5. "Walking out of a particularly colorful M&M he says "great group therapy session today, eh, guys!"

– Darren Bowe, MD

"I have never known anyone who can wax so poetic about bowel-tones, the high pitched tinkling, the low grumbling... it is both musical and informative.

"Most of all, Hugh's deep caring for his students and medical knowledge is inspirational."

– Alexandra Molnar, MD, International Medicine Clinic/Harborview Medical Center, College Head/Olympic College/University of Washington School of Medicine