

SURGERY

Synopsis



CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Douglas E. Wood, MD,
FACS, FRCSEd (*ad hom*)
The Henry N. Harkins
Professor and Chair

Without philanthropic giving from our friends, patients, alumni and current staff and faculty, our mission to “improve the health of the public” would be compromised; research to advance innovation would be curtailed, some clinical programs reduced in scope, investments in our residents and fellows diminished, and our commitment to vulnerable populations threatened.

Giving Back

We are fortunate that the Department of Surgery (DOS) has a number of individuals who support the mission with their philanthropy, and we are grateful and appreciative of those gifts. The stories

of what has inspired them to give to our Department would fill a book: A patient, grateful to be alive after a difficult surgery

shows their gratitude with a gift – large or small; the family of a patient, in gratitude or in memory, sets up a fund to advance research related to their disease; alumni grateful for the outstanding education they received give to make sure that commitment to education continues; staff members who are proud of the mission and demonstrated expertise in this Department, give to help carry on their good work. And our faculty give back because they helped to build this department and want to ensure its future greatness.

Scattered throughout this issue you will read several vignettes from individuals who have supported the department in meaningful ways and describe what motivates their giving. We believe you will find these narratives inspiring and appreciate the motivations that are common to many. We have also taken a look at the gifts that support our Department’s tri-part missions: teaching, research and clinical care, and describe how giving relates to our initiatives to become an ever-more diverse and inclusive Department. As the holder of the Harkins Endowed Chair, I can tell you that sustained gifts such as endowments and professorships have given us the ability to recruit new talent, grow important and life-saving programs and launch new initiatives in our Department. Without these gifts, our Department would not be the powerhouse it is today. As Chair, I am grateful to each and every donor.

Please read the entire issue to capture the flavor, depth and breadth of the philanthropy support of our Department.

UW at ACS Clinical Congress

The DOS was well represented and frequently honored during the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Annual Clinical Congress, held in San Francisco in late October. Some of the highlights: Dr. Pellegrini was honored with an “Icon of Surgery” award; Dr. Verrier was inducted into the ACS Academy of Master Surgeon Educators; Dr. Mika Sinanan was elected Secretary of the ACS Board of Governors; Dr. Ron Maier concluded his very successful year as ACS President; and Dr. Valarie Rusch, a UW Surgery Alumnus became President of the ACS. There were numerous faculty and residents who were invited to speak or present. Please read all about the Department’s representation at the ACS Clinical Congress on page 8.

Innovation and Introductions

Clinically, the Department proudly continues at the forefront of innovation. The University of Washington Medical Center received the very first Robotic Surgery Center of Excellence (COE) designation on the West Coast, a recognition of many individuals, but with special appreciation to the leadership of Dr. Jim Park in taking us to this level in robotic surgery. Read about it on page 18.

The annual Harkins Symposium and Strauss Lecture were held in October. We were honored to have Dr. Valerie Rusch as our 70th Alfred A. Strauss Visiting Professor, a former resident and faculty at the University of Washington

(continued on page 2)

CHAIR'S MESSAGE –

Continued from page 1

and current President of the ACS. Dr. Rusch was also honored by the Harkins Society as this year's Distinguished Alumnus. We provide highlights of these always important and inspiring events on page 17.

We welcomed some new faculty since the last issue. Please read their bios on page 13 and join us in welcoming them to our Department. And, we learn more about Dr. Catherine Kling in our popular #GettingtoKnowDoS on page 19.

I wish each and all Happy Holidays and a promising New Year.

Sincerely,

Douglas E. Wood, MD,
FACS, FRCSEd (ad hom)
The Henry N. Harkins
Professor and Chair

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SURGERY SYNOPSIS

Table of Contents

Chair's Message.....	page 1
Our Mission, Our Support.....	page 3
Surgery News.....	page 8
2019 ACS Clinical Congress.....	page 8
Dr. Edward Verrier Selected Puget Sound Business Journal Physician Educator of the Year.....	page 10
Dr. Carlos Pellegrini's ESA Honorary Member Lecture Published in Annals of Surgery.....	page 11
Dr. Benjamin Starnes Elected Western Vascular Society President.....	page 11
Susan Marx Elected Association of Academic Surgical Administrators Vice President.....	page 12
American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery Foundation's 'Walk from Obesity'.....	page 12
2019 New Faculty.....	page 13
Publications.....	page 15
Harkins' Corner.....	page 16
2019 Annual Dr. Alfred A. Strauss Lecture and Harkins Symposium.....	page 17
Clinical Highlight– Robotic Surgery.....	page 18
Department of Surgery– In the Media.....	page 18
#GettingToKnowDOS– Dr. Catherine Kling.....	page 19



DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

our mission, our support

Howie Surgery Research Endowment Fund



Philanthropy has played a critical role in the development of the Department's research agenda and the "Howie" endowment has been foundational in this work, impacting every division across the department.

Named for Ruth and Raymond Howie, the **Howie Surgery Research Endowment Fund** was established in 1981 with a \$1.5M gift after Mrs. Howie underwent surgery at University Hospital, now UW Medical Center, where she met Dr. K. Alvin Merendino (pictured left). Dr. Merendino was a pioneering

open-heart surgeon who led the team that performed the Northwest's first open-heart surgery in 1956 at Harborview Medical Center, and was Chair of the Department of Surgery (DOS) from 1964 until 1972. Dr. Merendino was passionate about research and innovation, and the Howies' gift and resulting dividends continue to be a tremendous boon to the department's research mission on multiple fronts.

Perhaps one of the most impactful uses of the Howie endowment has been in providing critical startup funding to new recruits who are interested in building a career grounded in research, thus helping to create new and innovative directions for research in the Department. This startup funding helps to defray the costs of protected research time and provides the necessary resources to hire lab staff, purchase necessary supplies, services and materials, and begin developing pilot data, methodologies and techniques that will help faculty researchers launch their careers and ultimately build grant-funded and sustainable research programs. The Howie endowment has supported many success stories: Dr. **Farhood Farjah**, Associate Professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and holder of the Endowed Chair in Lung Cancer Research, received support from the Howie Endowment. He is now an independently funded investigator who has gone on to receive an R01 grant from the National Cancer Institute. His research focuses on improving healthcare delivery and outcomes for individuals at risk for and/or diagnosed with lung cancer. Dr. **Venu Pillarisetty**, an Associate Professor in the Division of General Surgery, is performing cutting-edge research to develop novel immunotherapy strategies for pancreatic and colorectal carcinoma. After receiving support from the Howie Endowment to fund his early work, he has gone on to receive two grants from the Department of Defense, numerous highly competitive grants from within the UW-FHCRC Cancer Consortium, and multiple grants from industry collaborators. More

"Why I Give"

Ronald V. Maier, MD, FACS, FRCS Ed (Hon), FCSHK (Hon), FCCS (Hon)
Jane and Donald D. Trunkey Professor and Vice Chair of Surgery
University of Washington School of Medicine
Surgeon-in-Chief
Harborview Medical Center

I've now spent nearly 39 years, essentially my entire surgical and academic career, at the University of Washington Harborview Medical Center. Why have I stayed and why do I contribute?

I have always found that the environment at Harborview Medical Center and at the University of Washington Department of Surgery has been excellent for my personal maturation, clinical activities and research endeavors. I have had outstanding leadership, primarily with Dr. **Peligrini**, and now with Dr. **Wood**, and have had numerous outstanding mentors both in and outside the Department of Surgery. The entire academic community at the University of Washington is full of colleagues and collaborators that are always willing to assist, support, and stimulate an academic milieu for promotion and success. In addition, I have had the wonderful opportunity to have had a clinical practice filled with challenging and fantastic patients, who have both tested me and helped me develop into an outstanding technical and caregiving physician. In addition, and potentially most importantly, I have always had the opportunity of being surrounded by extremely intelligent, challenging, and thus constantly stimulating trainees, including students, residents and fellows.

When one evaluates and considers the enormous benefits that have been given to me during my career in the Department of Surgery at the University of Washington and Harborview Medical Center, it becomes obvious that it is my obligation to not only return my efforts in the clinical arena, my intellect in research endeavors, and my commitment to my mentees throughout the years, but also to support and develop and enhance the infrastructure to allow for even further development of my colleagues and to generate a structure of support that will optimize the training and resilience for the next generation of clinicians, scientists, and caregivers. I give because there is a constant and chronic need for additional funds to support and create the additional components of the academic structure. I give because I owe to so many in my own career, that I wish to ensure the success and creativity for the subsequent generations. I have benefitted enormously from training and working in the UW Department of Surgery and I am so pleased to be able to return in some small part the great gifts I have received.



DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

our mission, our support (cont.)

Howie Surgery Research Endowment Fund (cont.)

recent recipients of funding from the Howie Endowment have diverse research interests, ranging from global emergency care systems, palliative care, breast cancer surgery outcomes, to the development of novel biomaterials for use in pancreatic surgery.

Another important role of the Howie Endowment is to provide bridge funding to support ongoing research programs. The endowment has provided support for investigators who find themselves facing temporary gaps in external funding, to make for critical hires to support their lab or program, or to help advance an existing area of research into a new, cutting-edge direction.

The Howie Endowment is a critical resource in supporting the Department's research mission, helping launch clinician-researchers, providing pilot funding that will result in future grant funding, and helping to sustain their work or establish new areas of work when grant funding is not immediately available. A research portfolio as robust as ours depends on grateful patients, alumni, and friends of the Department who see the value in the innovative work we do, and we're incredibly grateful for their support. These gifts live on long after they given and make a truly meaningful impact on healthcare.



Support this fund

The John A. and Helen R. Schilling Traveling Surgical Fellowship

The multi-dimensional foundation on which young surgeon-scientists will build their research careers begins during their surgical residency. This period of immersion into learning about surgical diseases and developing clinical skills has the singular goal of developing safe and competent surgeons. However, this is also an ideal time to ignite an interest in research and provide the environment to obtain the skills and experience needed to embark on a career as a surgical investigator. The optimal environment includes a group of experienced surgeon-scientists as mentors, a departmental plan for integrating research training with clinical training, a culture that embraces evidence-based medicine in the care of our patients, and the financial resources needed to create a supportive research environment for our residents. The role of generous and ongoing philanthropy in this four-part foundation is critical.

Established in 1986, the **John A. and Helen R. Schilling Travelling Surgical Fellowship** sought to provide funding for residents to travel to other institutions for their research development and experience. It was also used for research development for potential faculty, a need Dr. John Schilling observed during his years as a distinguished member of our faculty. In 1996, the endowment was amended to reflect the robust research environment at UW and allowed funding for research experiences at UW laboratories. The Schilling Fellowship exists distinctly yet inseparable from the Helen and John Schilling Endowed Lecture-ship and Research Symposium in Surgery. Together, these gifts reflect Helen and John Schilling's devotion to the science and art of surgery and honor that tradition. Together, they provide the foundation of philanthropy in our department's mission to train future surgical scientists.



Support from the Schilling Fellowship has been used in a number of ways since it was established and has impacted the research education and training of dozens of our residents. The endowment has provided resident salary support either as a supplement to other funding, or in whole when other funding is unavailable but an excellent research opportunity presents itself. When our Department's T32 training program in trauma research lost funding from the National Institutes of Health for two years, interim salary support allowed us to continue resident research training and facilitated a successful application for renewed federal funding. This example is one of many, sometimes unanticipated, ways that endowment support can breathe new life into our training programs and even restore peer-reviewed funding to our department.

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

our mission, our support (cont.)

The John A. and Helen R. Schilling Traveling Surgical Fellowship (cont.)

The endowment supports additional expenses and educational experiences that are critical to a well-rounded resident research experience. In years past, formal training in research skills was limited. The resident trainee would design experiments, analyze data and learn about the ethics of research, oftentimes on their own. The Schillings knew that a supportive environment was perhaps the most critical aspect of research training; maintaining and growing that environment is our collective goal. Research training must happen in a community rather than in isolation, and surgeon-scientists seek a much broader and sophisticated skill set than in past decades. Endowment support has enabled the Department to increase the breadth and depth of the research experience of our trainees. Trainees now want to study the epidemiology of surgical conditions in a global context, they want to design clinical trials of surgical interventions, they want to learn how to lead teams that develop systems of surgical care, and they want to study the molecular biology of surgical diseases. The Schilling Fellowship has facilitated this aspect of research training by providing tuition support for advanced degrees. Philanthropic support is central to the continued growth of this robust environment that will foster research training experiences and improve the care of our patients.

The lesser-known stories behind the facts are just as interesting and often more compelling. This story has many plots but one reflects an important and perhaps unexpected consequence of the Schillings' vision and generosity: following Dr. Schilling's death, the endowment was again amended with an additional gift of \$1.8 million in July 2000. This gift was made possible by the sale of the Schillings' property on Lake Washington, which was sold to the City of Bellevue. Their expressed wish was that the City use this property to develop a waterfront park. This wish is now a reality and the park, located on Meydenbauer Bay, was recently completed and is open for all. This gesture of returning land to the community at large and using the proceeds from that sale for future public good through surgical research training serves as a reminder of the many benefits of giving back.

We are thankful for the vision of Mrs. Helen and Dr. John Schilling and for their ongoing support of resident research in our department. We look forward to building on their generosity by growing our foundation of philanthropic support in parallel with the continued growth of our cadre of mentors and the expansion of our research training programs.



[Support this fund](#)

"Why I Donate"

Jorge D. Reyes, MD
Roger K. Giesecke Distinguished Chair
Professor and Chief
Division of Transplant Surgery
University of Washington School of Medicine



We sometimes perceive our professional lives as being a somewhat narrow, albeit highly focused, aspect of the whole—separate from our personal lives, our families, and who we are outside of work. However, professional success does not happen in isolation. In order to be successful at work, one must balance a professional existence with family, friends, other interests, and general well-being. This balance, as opposed to a narrow focus, allows us to see more deeply into all aspects of our-

selves, to see what otherwise may go unperceived, and to see that which can be invested in all that we do. I understand this today as I write this, celebrating my 65th birthday.

I started donating to transplant-related causes more than 30 years ago, early in my career, with one of the first recipients being the Starzl Endowed Chair.

Not long after, I discovered Camp Chiopi, a summer camp for children ages 7-15 who have received liver and/or intestine transplants. The camp provides a non-clinical setting where campers can re-build self-esteem and interact with others with similar medical backgrounds. I was so touched by their mission that I designated them another recipient of my ongoing financial contributions.

My journey at the University of Washington has demonstrated to me the amazing work that has been done and continues to be done in the Department of Surgery, as well as my deep connection with this Department. Since I've started working here at the UW, I've expanded my philanthropy beyond transplant, with funds being funneled towards increasing diversity of our trainees and other educational initiatives. I am fortunate enough to be in a position to give back, to express my appreciation for all that I've been given. Giving begins with a thought, a donation, however small - and that gift grows as the work that it supports comes to fruition, benefitting our field, our patients, and each other.

I am so grateful for all that I have received in my professional life, for the privilege of having cared for our patients, and to be able to work with such wonderful women and men in our field and to see their growth as surgeons, healers, and scientists. I will always carry a sincere love for this department, the city, and the University of Washington, and I am so honored to be able to give back to them. Why do I give? In a nutshell, I give because of love.

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

our mission, our support (cont.)

"The Joy of Giving"

Dr. Nicholas B. Vedder
Professor of Surgery & Orthopaedics
Jamie Hunter Endowed Chair
Chief of Plastic Surgery; Vice Chair, Surgery
University of Washington School of Medicine



All of us faculty in DOS have come to learn the reality that many elements critical to career development in academic surgery and creating the future of the specialty (and subspecialties) of Surgery, rely on funding that doesn't exist in the traditional clinical funds flow of the Department or the University. They rely on endowments – monies that come from donations, not from clinical income. Only endowments allow us to develop and support our programs in ways no other funding source can, such as:

- faculty development including advanced education and degrees such as master's programs in research, education, and communication;
- providing critical startup research support that allows faculty and trainees to gather preliminary data necessary for application for independent research funding;
- educational opportunities for our residents and trainees;
- and, in all of these ways, allowing us to develop clinical programs to serve our community and provide the kind of "life rebuilding" care that is at the core of our life mission as surgeons.

Creating these endowments is not easy, though. Donations don't just fall from the sky; they require vision, dedicated relationship building, nurturing, but mostly – giving. When I joined the Surgery faculty in 1990, after having been a Surgery resident and Trauma Research Fellow in the '80's, my Chief and mentor, Dr. **Loren Engrav**, Professor Emeritus in the Division of Plastic Surgery, shared a key principle with me: the most effective way to raise money is to show how important it is to you by leading with giving yourself. That principle has been in my heart ever since.

Fifteen years ago, I had the good fortune to be able to help rebuild the body and life of a young woman who was nearly killed when a falling boulder crushed her on Mt. Adams. Her grateful family honored me by creating the **Jamie Hunter Endowed Professorship in Reconstructive Plastic Surgery** at Harborview, an endowed Professorship that I have held since. I have been fortunate to be able to use that endowment for all the critical areas I describe above, helping our program in Plastic Surgery more than double in faculty, residents, and clinical programs during that period.

In creating that endowed Professorship, Dr. **Carlos Pellegrini**, the most important leadership and "life mentor" in my life, demonstrated the power of Dr. Engrav's principle when he called to tell me that he and Kelly had just donated \$50K to the creation of the Hunter Professorship. I thanked him, hung up, and said to my wife, wow, we need to give \$50K, too. And that was the beginning of my passion for philanthropy.

Last year my wife, Susan Heckbert, MD, PhD, and I were able to realize a life goal of ours in becoming UW "Laureate" donors, with lifetime giving of \$1 million. This allowed us to double the size of the Hunter Endowment and make it an Endowed Chair, and to create an endowed Fellowship in Epidemiology in Susan's name. In addition to the incredible sense of gratification in becoming a UW Laureate donor, it comes with some nice perks, like free parking (the ONLY way you get free parking at the UW!); invitation to dinner with President Cauce, my hero, and her spouse at the President's home, Hill-Crest; our names on the wall of

Suzallo Library, and the annual major donor dinner in the Suzallo, greeted outside by UW mascot "Dubs." But, most importantly, giving comes with a tremendous sense of personal joy in knowing that you have helped create something that will ensure the future growth and development of what you have worked to build over your career. Creating the future.

But helping to create the future does not require a gift of \$1M. ANY gift to something that holds personal significance or meaning to you can help create the future. Several of our graduates have created endowment funds to support areas important to them. Vishal Kapoor created the "Vishal Kapoor, MD Endowed Fund for UW Residents in Plastic Surgery" to support educational opportunities and professional development for our plastic surgery residents. Emilia Ploplys created the "Emilia Ploplys, MD UW Plastic Surgery World Travel Endowed Fund" to support UW plastic surgery residents' participation in global surgery mission work. And, many of our faculty and alumni have contributed to these funds. In Plastic Surgery, I am proud to say that we have 100% faculty participation in UW giving every year. Whatever future is important to you, I urge you to give to it. In life, the more you give, the more you will receive in the end.



Dr. Nicholas Vedder and his wife Susan
outside Suzallo Library with "Dubs."
The Vedders are Huskies for life!

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

our mission, our support (cont.)

"Not Forgotten"



Novelett Cotter and Christoph McKenzie

Novelett Cotter knew something was wrong with her son, Christoph McKenzie. The chest pain. Stretch marks that came and went. Extreme double-jointedness. In 2008, at 24, he was diagnosed: Marfan's syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects connective tissue and the aorta. Then came surgery – his weakened aorta was replaced with a mechanical valve. He took blood thinners and avoided exertion.

Two years later, the chest pains began again. Awaiting cardiac surgery at Harborview Medical Center, McKenzie started to convulse. As doctors rushed to revive him, his mother bolted from the room to call her sister, but when she tried to return, a young woman gently stopped her. Pulling Cotter aside, she explained that McKenzie was suffering from heavy internal bleeding and might not survive. Unfortunately, she was right.

In life, McKenzie was outgoing and affectionate, training to become a pharmacy technician. In death, he inspired the lives of two women: his mother and the young woman – Sherene Shalhub, MD, MPH, then a general surgery resident – who'd broken the news in the hospital hallway.

Shalhub never forgot about McKenzie. "He was so young, and it was so devastating for his mother and his family," she says. "It made me feel very helpless. I decided I wanted to learn as much as possible about Marfan's and try to help people have better quality of life and better outcomes."

In the meantime, Cotter grieved. The death was so sudden and unexpected. "We thought that he would be around for a long time," says Cotter. "There would be health challenges, but we were prepared for that." Another source of grief: she thought that people would simply forget her son.

Years passed. Then, in early 2018, Cotter went to a nail salon for a manicure. While waiting her turn, she kept sneaking glances at a familiar-looking man who was sitting nearby with his daughter, trying to place him. Finally, she asked him if he was a doctor, and he said he was. A surgeon? Yes, he said, a vascular surgeon.

"I said, 'I'm Christoph McKenzie's mother,' and he jumped out of the chair and hugged me!" Cotter says.



Novelett Cotter and Dr. Sherene Shalhub

It turned out that this surgeon – Ben Starnes, MD, FACS, chief of UW Medicine's vascular surgery division and the Alexander Whitehill Clowes, MD, Endowed Chair in Vascular Surgery – and Shalhub had both overseen McKenzie's care at Harborview. It also turned out that they had not forgotten the young man. Far from it. In fact, they wanted to create a memorial fund in McKenzie's name.

Starnes also told Cotter that Shalhub had dedicated her career to researching genetically triggered diseases of the arteries and aorta. "Suddenly, I remembered that lady who met me at the door," says Cotter.

Soon after, Starnes, Shalhub and Cotter met in person for an emotional reunion – and to plan the creation of the Christoph McKenzie Memorial Fund for Aortic Dissection Research.

"I wanted his family to know that because of their son, we're doing all this work," says Shalhub. "It's a way for people to support the research, helping to bring the resources together and advance science."

The first project supported by the new research fund is a risk calculator that will help assess a patient's genetic profile, family history and other factors to predict the likelihood of an aortic rupture like McKenzie's – and to enable doctors to offer earlier interventions to high-risk patients. With early diagnosis and a comprehensive care plan, Shalhub says, patients with Marfan's can have a better life expectancy.

For her part, Cotter is overjoyed that the research fund is one way her son can help others. And she's ready to help it succeed.

"If Christoph can make an impact on others who have Marfan's, then his death might not be in vain," his mother says. "On his behalf, I'll be working. I'll spend the rest of my days helping however I can."

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Surgery News

2019 AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS CLINICAL CONGRESS

Dr. Carlos Pellegrini Receives ACS Icon in Surgery Honor

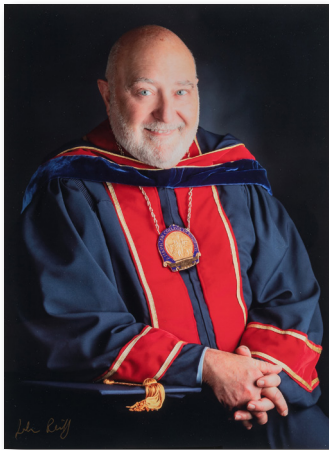


Image courtesy of the Archives of the
American College of Surgeons

Dr. **Carlos Pellegrini**, Professor Emeritus, former UW Medicine Chief Medical Officer and UW Vice President for Medical Affairs, was honored by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) as an “**Icon in Surgery**” at the ACS annual Clinical Congress in October 2019.

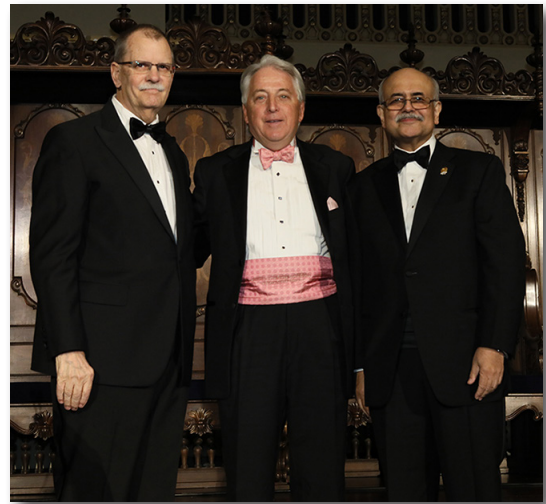
“I was honored and humbled by the ACS decision to confer this honor to me,” expresses Dr. Pellegrini. “I am the first one to recognize that my designation reflects in great part the dedication and the work of every member of the Department of Surgery (DOS) at the University of Washington (UW) with whom I have had the privilege to work. And, for that, I am particularly thankful. While the ceremony was impressive, what really touched my heart were the words of all those who reflected on their special relationship with me...those expressions of gratitude are permanently engraved in my memory – and in my soul.”

“Dr. Pellegrini is a role model, colleague, and friend for all of us in UW DOS,” states Dr. **Douglas Wood**, The Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair. “His accomplishments and recognitions are legendary, but this most recent honor as an ‘Icon in Surgery’ by the ACS is a rare and

singular celebration of Dr. Pellegrini’s long influence in surgery, and on the people he has touched. Although Dr. Pellegrini is a renowned surgical leader, what holds him apart is his strength of character, integrity, kindness, and his deep understanding and love for people. Dr. Pellegrini is the type of surgeon, and person, that we all aspire to be.”

[View Dr. Pellegrini’s ACS Icons in Surgery video >>](#)

Dr. Ed Verrier Inducted into ACS Academy of Master Surgeon Educators



Left to right: David B. Hoyt, MD, FACS, Executive Director of the American College of Surgeons and Member of the Academy of Master Surgeon Educators Steering Committee; Ed D. Verrier, K. Alvin and Shirley Merendino Endowed Professor of Surgery, Division of Cardiovascular Surgery; Ajit K. Sachdeva, MD, FACS, FRCS, FSACME, Director of the ACS Division of Education and Co-Chair of the Academy of Master Surgeon Educators Steering Committee
Image courtesy of the Archives of the American College of Surgeons

Dr. **Ed Verrier**, Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, was inducted into the ACS Academy of Master Surgeon Educators. This honor is a tribute to a lifetime of dedication to surgical education. As program director for the Cardiothoracic Residency at UW, Dr. Verrier has been a mentor and role model who has influenced our department’s culture and commitment to surgical education. At the national level, his leadership of the Joint Council for Thoracic Surgical Education completely changed the curriculum, focus, and paradigm for residency programs in cardiothoracic surgery.

“In academic surgery we have three priorities: excellence in clinical care, furthering our specialties through research, and educating the next generation of surgeons,” states Dr. Verrier. “In our current world of incentives, education has been less rewarded as it is frequently viewed as an art form rather than a science...if one is a good clinical surgeon, then one is most likely a good educator. For the ACS to honor “Master Surgical Educators” is an incredible step forward in recognizing the importance of teaching, mentorship, and coaching at every level of surgical education. For me personally as the sole cardiothoracic

2019 AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS CLINICAL CONGRESS (cont.)

surgeon recognized, being inducted into the Academy of Master Surgical Educators is the pinnacle of my career and will always be cherished. It is also a responsibility. I hope to continue to contribute more to the Academy and the UW in the future and strengthen this message to the next generation of surgical educators.”

The aim of the new ACS Academy of Master Surgeon Educators is to recognize and assemble a team of Master Surgeon Educators of national and international renown who will work closely with the ACS Division of Education to advance the science and practice of avant-garde surgical education and training.

The goals of the Academy include defining megatrends in surgical education and training; steering advances in the field; fostering innovation and collaboration; supporting faculty development and recognition; and underscoring the critical importance of surgical education and training in the changing milieu of health care.

Dr. Mika Sinanan Elected ACS Secretary by Board of Governors



Dr. **Mika Sinanan**, Professor, Division of General Surgery, was elected Secretary of ACS Board of Governors in October 2019.

Dr. Sinanan expresses, “In the role of Secretary to the Board of Governors, I’m very honored to serve on the Executive Committee. I look forward to representing the Governors’ perspective and sharing back with them the strategic and financial priorities of the ACS.”

“Dr. Mika Sinanan has been an influential leader in UW Medicine and nationally,” said Dr. **Douglas Wood**, The Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair. “He led our physicians organization as President of University of Washington Physicians, and he has served in leadership positions in our state and regional organizations. With a long commitment to advocacy and physician engagement in health care policy, Dr. Sinanan serves as the ACS Pillar Lead for Advocacy and Health Policy. His election to the prominent position of Secretary of the ACS Board of Governors is recognition of his national leadership and affords him major influence in the direction of the ACS.”

Surgery News

Surgical Metrics Project at the ACS Clinical Congress



In October, several surgeons from UW participated in an ongoing project on the value of testing aging surgeons at the ACS Clinical Congress in San Francisco. Earlier in the year, ACS learned of a related article “[The Aging Physician and the Medical Profession: A Review.](#)” *JAMA Surg.* 2017;152(10):967-71 by Drs. **Carlos Pellegrini**,

(top left) Professor Emeritus, former UW Medicine Chief Medical Officer and UW Vice President for Medical Affairs, and **E. Patchen Dellinger**, (bottom left) Professor Emeritus, Department of Surgery. ACS asked Drs. Pellegrini and Dellinger to join a discussion with members of the College regarding the possibility of assessing surgeons’ technical performance and determining the degree to which several factors impact



that performance as. Dr. Carla Pugh, Professor of Surgery at Stanford, had developed methods for measuring several aspects of technical performance and led the experiment, calling it the “Surgical Metrics Project.” In the activity, participants were equipped with magnetic motion tracking technology synchronized with headgear that captured EEG, video, and audio data. Working in sync, these instruments provided a moment-to-moment account of each step and decision that the surgeon made while operating and measured time and flow efficiency to provide an accurate assessment of the surgical process while the surgeon repaired a defect in a sample of porcine intestine. A total of 252 surgeons participated at the Congress at 10 workstations in the exhibit hall. Data obtained will be analyzed to answer the following questions:

- What decisions do surgeons make when faced with a surgical task? (i.e., how do they position themselves, their assistant, the tissue, the instruments, etc.)
- How do decisions and technical approaches affect outcomes/bowel repair quality?
- Can data collected here serve as an initial platform to create a database that might serve as a benchmarking resource for trainees and even for practicing surgeons?
- Is there an expert strategy or evidenced-based approach that can be discovered in the data and shared with participants?
- How do certain external stimuli affect performance?
- Can this database serve as a platform to discuss the possibility of longitudinal, personal assessment where participants track their own performance throughout their career?

Additional description and details regarding this project can be found in the [September ACS Bulletin](#).

Surgery News

2019 AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS CLINICAL CONGRESS (cont.)

Department of Surgery 2019 ACS Clinical Congress Presentations



Bulger



Davidson



Dick



Flum

Dr. **Eileen Bulger**, Professor & Chief, of Trauma, Division of Trauma, Burn & Critical Care Surgery, "How can we improve outcome for NSTI"

Dr. **Giana Davidson**, Associate Professor, Division of General Surgery, "ACS General Surgery Review Course: Benign Biliary Disease" and "Clinical Panel: State of the Evidence - Antibiotics for Appendicitis"

Dr. **Andre Dick**, Associate Professor, Division of Transplant Surgery, "The Impact of Insurance Status on Children Undergoing Liver Transplantation" and Surgical Metrics Project

Dr. **David Flum**, Professor, Associate Chair for Research, Division of General Surgery, "Nonoperative management of appendicitis"



Maier



Pellegrini



Sinanan



Daniel

Dr. **Ron Maier**, Professor & Chief, Division of Trauma, Burn & Critical Care, "Surgery Resident Program at Clinical Congress: Essential Skills for Surgery Residents: Fireside chat with Ronald V. Maier," "Convocation Introduction" and "I.S. Ravdin Lecture in the Basic and Surgical Sciences Response to Injury: The Genomic Storm and Precision Medicine"

Dr. **Carlos Pellegrini**, Professor Emeritus, former UW Medicine Chief Medical Officer and UW Vice President for Medical Affairs, "Icon in Surgery Presentation (Recipient)" and Surgical Metrics Project

Dr. **Mika Sinanan**, Professor, Division of General Surgery, "Business environment for surgery" (to the Board of Regents and Board of Governors of the ACS)

Dr. **Sara Daniel**, Research Resident, "Evaluating the role of hypoxia in anti-tumor immune response to pancreatic adenocarcinoma"

Dr. Edward Verrier Selected Puget Sound Business Journal Physician Educator of the Year



"I am very pleased and proud to announce Dr. **Ed Verrier**, Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, has been selected as the Physician Educator of the Year by the Puget Sound Business Journal as part of their 2019 Health Care Leadership Awards.

Dr. Verrier has a lifelong career of dedication to surgical education, with a profound influence here at UW, but also nationally and internationally. For many years as Program Director of the Cardiothoracic (CT) Surgery Residency, he created a culture of educational commitment that has led our CT programs to be considered among the top programs in the country. Dr. Verrier was then selected to be the Surgical Director of the Joint Council of Thoracic Surgical Education, a major investment of CT organizations to upgrade and revolutionize CT education in the United States. His leadership of this effort has transformed CT surgery training and has created a new generation of surgical educators with his "Educating the Educators" courses.

Dr. Verrier has been honored with virtually every teaching award he could be eligible for, beginning with the John K. Stevenson Award from the residents in the UW DOS. He received the Socrates Award from the Thoracic Surgery Residents Association, and the Bruce Gilliland Award as the teacher of the year throughout the UW system of over 3,000 faculty. In October 2019, he was inducted into the ACS Academy of Master Surgeon Educators. This latest honor from the Puget Sound Business Journal is well-deserved and acknowledges Dr. Verrier's major impact on surgical education in our community and also across specialties well beyond UW Surgery. There is no one I can think of who is more deserving of this award and recognition. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Verrier for his remarkable leadership in surgery and education."

Dr. Verrier says "Being recognized by the Puget Sound Business Journal as Physician Educator of the Year is an unexpected and welcomed honor. In surgical academia we can be appreciated for our clinical skills or productivity in the research arena but often educational commitment is taken for granted. Maintaining superb clinical outcomes with the additional responsibility of training the next generation is worth noting. This type of recognition really celebrates all surgeons who commit to not only exceptional clinical care but also teaching, mentoring and coaching young surgeons in training to care for our loved ones in the future."

[Puget Sound Business Journal story >>](#)

Dr. Douglas Wood
The Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair

Surgery News

Dr. Carlos Pellegrini's ESA Honorary Member Lecture Published in Annals of Surgery



Dr. **Carlos Pellegrini**, Professor Emeritus, former UW Medicine Chief Medical Officer and UW Vice President for Medical Affairs, presented the European Surgical Association's Honorary Member Lecture at its annual meeting in May 2019. The lecture was published in the November 2019 [Annals of Surgery](#). The lecture, "Achieving Mastery in the Practice of Surgery" outlines 10

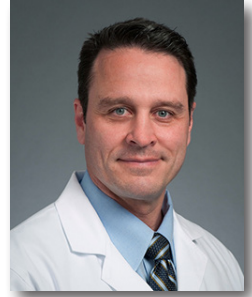
principles of becoming a master surgeon and covers topics such as the ability to develop and lead a high-performing team; a clear focus on patient-centered care; ability to train, teach, and learn; championing quality of care; embracing professionalism; and more.

Dr. Pellegrini states, "Traditionally, the training of surgeons has focused on the development of the technical aspects related to the performance of an operation, and on acquiring knowledge regarding disease processes, diagnosis and management. Starting in 1993 and working with the residency program directors and the faculty we expanded the focus of our efforts to train residents also in the many non-technical aspects that play such an important role in the outcome of surgery. Our department has since led the nation in its focus on developing 'the total person/surgeon.' This article reflects the philosophical basis for that approach."

"Dr. Pellegrini might have retired from UW Medicine, but he is far from retired!" expresses Dr. **Douglas Wood**, The Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair. "He continues to teach, to coach, and to have a broad impact in medicine that benefits the people and the health systems that he touches."

Dr. Benjamin Starnes Elected Western Vascular Society President

Dr. **Benjamin W. Starnes**, Professor and Chief, Division of Vascular Surgery, was passed the Edwin J. Wylie Gavel of presidency for the Western Vascular Society (WVS). He is the 35th society president and will preside over the 35th WVS Annual Meeting in September 2020 in Santa Monica, CA.



Dr. Starnes says, "Given the known rich and colorful history of this very special membership, I am deeply humbled and appreciative to have been elected to this highest position within the WVS. I consider this to be one of the highlights of my career as a vascular surgeon."

The Edwin J. Wylie Gavel was given to the society at the 1990 Coronado meeting. President at the time was Dr. Ronald Stoney who used oak from his ranch in California to create a gavel to commemorate Edwin J. Wylie, a pioneer in American surgery. Wylie was a senior vascular surgeon at the University of California at San Francisco and a mentor to many of the surgical leaders in the society. Dr. Starnes' name will be engraved on the gavel this year joining other UW leaders in vascular surgery who served the society including other notable DOS faculty such as 1998 President D. Eugene Strandness, Jr, MD and 2008 President Alexander W. Clowes, MD. Also of mention is the role of Eugene Zieler, MD, Professor, Division of Vascular Surgery, in WVS, who was a founding member of the society.



Image courtesy of the Western Vascular Society

Surgery News

Susan Marx Elected Association of Academic Surgical Administrators Vice President



Susan Marx, MBA, PMP, CPC, Department of Surgery Director of Finance and Administration, was elected as the incoming Vice President for the **Association of Academic Surgical Administrators (AASA)** in September 2019. Susan will serve a three-year term as Vice President, President and Past President.

Susan expresses, "It means so much to me to be elected by my academic surgical administrative peers across the country as AASA Vice President for the 2019 term. I am also honored to represent the UW and appreciate Dr. **Douglas Wood's**, The Henry Harkins Professor and Chair, enthusiastic support in this endeavor. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Margaret Gilshannon, former Director of DOS, nudging me to consider getting involved with the AASA when I was the Transplant and Pediatric Surgery Administrator. I am thrilled to participate on the AASA Board of Directors for three years, and particularly to be inducted as President in 2020 in Chicago – my home away from home, and home to ACS."

As AASA Vice President, Susan states, "I want to continue to expand the range of topics and our sponsorship for key educational offerings which includes the annual and mid-year conferences, webinars and the website. I would also like to work with the membership chair and region representatives to reach out to newer AASA members to engage them in these activities so they feel that AASA provides value by soliciting their ideas and giving them a space to contribute for professional development for themselves and their colleagues."

"This is a huge honor for Susan and a tribute to her leadership here at the UW, as well as her stature and reputation nationally as a leading surgical administrator," says Dr. Wood. "Not only is this a high honor for Susan personally, it's also a positive reflection of UW DOS and UW Medicine, not just in the physician community, but also in the community of administrators. This augments the reputation of our department, enhances our influence in our national organizations, and is a source of pride for all of us working at UW. This is a well-deserved honor for Susan who has led our department with thoughtfulness, innovation, and financial discipline. I value Susan's contributions to the continued success of UW Surgery, and look forward to her leadership and influence at the national level with the AASA."

American Society For Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery Foundation's "Walk from Obesity"

In October, staff and faculty from the **Center for Weight Loss and Metabolic Surgery** participated in the **American Society For Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery Foundation's "Walk from Obesity."** The walk aims to raise awareness about the obesity epidemic and the increased need for access to treatment. The UW had a wonderful presence at the event, and staff and faculty were especially thankful for the many patients who attended, including one who took an early morning ferry to make it in time!



Photo credit: Stacy Nagy, Program Operations Specialist

SAVE THE DATES

2020 Research Resident Symposium

Friday March 13, 2020,
7:00am-3:00pm
UW Tower Auditorium

26th Annual Helen and John Schilling Lecture

Friday March 13, 2020,
3:30pm-4:30pm
UW Tower Auditorium

More information:
dosadmin@uw.edu
206-543-3680

Department of Surgery Monthly Grand Rounds

First Wednesday
of each month,
6:30am-7:30am,
Health Sciences
Building, Room K-069

More information:
dosadmin@uw.edu
206-543-3680

Check our [event calendar](#) for
updated information.

NEW FACULTY

It is with great pleasure we announce and welcome our new faculty members. Each new faculty member introduces an added level of experience, quality, and service to the Department of Surgery.



Dr. Suzanne Inchauste,
Assistant Professor,
Division of Plastic Surgery

Dr. Inchauste's primary areas of interest include microsurgical breast reconstruction, breast aesthetics, complex oncologic reconstruction, abdominal wall reconstruction, lymphedema surgery, extremity reconstruction, body contour and aesthetic surgery. Her primary sites of practice

include University of Washington (UW) Medical Center and Northwest Hospital. Born and raised in Seattle, she received her bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and completed medical school at Indiana University School of Medicine, where she stayed to complete her general surgery residency. While in general surgery residency, she completed a four-year Immunotherapy and Surgical Oncology research fellowship at the National Cancer Institute. She then relocated to Ohio for her plastic surgery residency at University of Cincinnati Medical Center. Most recently she completed a Microsurgery Fellowship at Stanford University. When she's not caring for patients, Dr. Inchauste enjoys spending time with friends and family, being outdoors, skiing, hiking, running, biking, rock climbing, and exploring the Pacific Northwest.



Dr. Rebecca Maine,
Assistant Professor,
Division of Trauma, Burn &
Critical Care Surgery

Dr. Maine's focus includes trauma and acute care surgery, elective general surgery and global surgery. After studying electrical engineering and working in management consulting, she matriculated to the University of California San Francisco Medical School

where she completed her general surgery residency. Dr. Maine returns to Harborview Medicine Center (HMC), where she completed her Surgical Critical Care Fellowship, after spending two years as Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Maine is passionate about studying and addressing the inequities in access to quality surgical care nationally and internationally. As a medical student, she evaluated the outcomes of children treated on cleft palate missions in Ecuador and found high complication rates, fueling her

Surgery News

interest in Global Surgery. During her residency she spent two years as a Paul Farmer Global Surgery Fellow with the Program for Global Surgery and Social Change at Harvard Medical School. There she completed her MPH and lived in Rwanda studying surgical and pre-hospital systems. At UNC, she co-directed the Malawi Surgical Initiative, continuing her work to understand how to improve surgical outcomes for patients in the Central Region of Malawi. She is very excited to join Department of Surgery colleagues Drs. Charles Mock, Professor, and Barclay Stewart, Assistant Professor, to leverage the tremendous resources at UW Department of Surgery (DOS) to develop novel approaches to understanding and improving trauma and surgical systems globally.

Dr. Maine and her husband, Jacob, are looking forward to enjoying the incredible nature, culture and food in the Pacific Northwest.

Dr. Erin Miller,
Assistant Professor,
Division of Plastic Surgery and
Adjunct Assistant Professor,
Department of Orthopaedics
and Sports Medicine



Dr. Miller's primary areas of interest include complex wrist injuries, nerve injuries, microvascular reconstruction of traumatic extremity injuries and tumors.

She practices at HMC and the Roosevelt Bone and Joint Clinic. Dr. Miller was raised in Rochester, NY and received her undergraduate degree in Biomedical Engineering from Northwestern University. She earned her medical degree as well as a Master's in Applied Anatomy from Case Western Reserve University. She relocated to Seattle for residency with the UW Integrated Plastic Surgery program and then completed her Hand Surgery Fellowship in the Department of Orthopedics. She is thrilled to be joining the faculty in DOS, as she has a passion for teaching and is excited to work with the resident cohort at UW. Dr. Miller enjoys spending her free time outdoors—mountain biking, tele skiing, climbing, backpacking and trail running with her two dogs. She and her fiancé, Ben, who is in his final year of Emergency Medicine residency at the UW, enjoy traveling internationally and as well as brewing beer.

Surgery

News



Dr. Deepika Nehra,
Assistant Professor,
Division of Trauma, Burn &
Critical Care Surgery

Dr. Nehra was born in India but grew up primarily in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada and Melbourne, Australia. She moved to the United States in high school and completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia fol-

lowed by medical school at Stanford University School of Medicine. She then completed General Surgery residency at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA followed by a Surgical Critical Care fellowship at HMC. After fellowship, Dr. Nehra chose to pursue her interest in global health and surgery in the limited resource setting by spending a year practicing as a general/trauma Surgeon at a regional referral hospital in Mbarara, Uganda. Since that time, she has spent the last three years as a trauma and acute care surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, MA. While at Brigham and Women's Hospital she was able to split her time between Boston and Rwanda, where she participated as a faculty educator through the Human Resources for Health Program. Outside of trauma and acute care surgery, she has a particular clinical interest in complex abdominal wall problems and reconstructions. Her research interests include better understanding the long-term impact of injury and emergency surgery with a particular interest in the psychosocial aspects. She is very excited to join the faculty at HMC and hopes to continue this work in addition to her work in the global health sphere. In her free time, Dr. Nehra enjoys cooking, running, and being outdoors with her husband, Sam, and dog, Billie.



Dr. Lara Oyetunji,
Assistant Professor, Division
of Cardiothoracic Surgery and
Section Chief of Cardiac Surgery at
the Veterans Administration Puget
Health Care System

Dr. Oyetunji earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Mississippi with honors from The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. She obtained her medical education from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine and commenced general surgery training at UW. She completed a two-year surgical oncology research fellowship at the National Institutes of Health after which she returned to UW and transitioned into the Integrated

NEW FACULTY (CONT.)

Cardiothoracic Surgery Residency program. Her post-graduate training was completed at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where she obtained her master of public health degree with a focus in epidemiology and global health. Dr. Oyetunji is a member of the multidisciplinary structural heart team at the UW Heart Institute and her clinical interests are in valvular heart disease, structural heart disease, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

Dr. Oyetunji's research interests are in surgical capacity building and developing access to safe surgical care in sub-Saharan Africa via twinning partnerships and bilateral exchange of ideas with academic medical centers; a particular area of focus in global surgery is the application of structural heart disease to the management of rheumatic heart disease. She is also interested in the development of quality improvement initiatives in cardiac surgery and recently joined the management committee of the Washington State Cardiac Outcomes Assessment Program with hopes of developing best practice guidelines in the state of Washington.

Outside of her professional work, Dr. Oyetunji is a travel enthusiast who loves exploring and learning from other cultures. She also enjoys running, hiking, dancing and has recently started taking swim lessons with the goal of completing a triathlon.

Dr. Samuel Rice-Townsend,
Assistant Professor,
Division of Pediatric
General Surgery



Dr. Rice-Townsend grew up in Pennsylvania before attending Amherst College. He then earned his medical degree from Stanford University School of Medicine and completed residency in General Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, followed by fellowship training in pediatric general and thoracic surgery at Seattle Children's Hospital (SCH). Prior to joining SCH, Dr. Rice-Townsend practiced at Boston Children's Hospital where he was an Assistant Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Rice-Townsend is board certified by the American Board of Surgery in general surgery and pediatric surgery. He is a member of the American Pediatric Surgical Association, a specialty fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

His clinical and research interests relate to anorectal malformations, Hirschsprung's disease, as well as neonatal and pediatric critical care, in particular as it pertains to extracorporeal life support (ECLS) and congenital diaphragmatic hernia. He is actively involved in the multidisciplinary Reconstructive Pelvic Medicine (RPM) program at SCH.

NEW FACULTY (CONT.)



Dr. Jonathan Sham,
Assistant Professor,
Division of General Surgery

After completing his General Surgery training at UW, Dr. Sham went on to complete fellowships in both Complex General Surgical Oncology and Hepatopancreatobiliary Surgery at the John Hopkins University (JHU) Hospital. Dr. Sham brings expertise in mul-

multiple complex hepatopancreatobiliary procedures including pancreatic islet auto-transplantation and minimally invasive pancreaticoduodenectomy. He is an active member of the American College of Surgeons, Society for Surgical Oncology, and America's Hepatopancreatobiliary Association.

Dr. Sham is originally from Dallas, TX and completed his bachelor's degree at Brandeis University prior to receiving his MD from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. While in residency he completed a two-year T32 National Institutes of Health research fellowship in Nanotechnology and Physical Science in Cancer Research, where he developed novel antibody-targeted theranostics for hepatocellular carcinoma and received local, regional, and national awards for his work. He will collaborate with Drs. Raymond Yeung, Professor and Section Chief of Hepatopancreatobiliary Surgery, James Park, Associate Professor, and Venu Pillarisetty, Associate Professor, on developing biotechnological solutions for many of the shortcomings of pancreatic surgery including inadequate imaging, pancreatic fistula, and early recurrence. Dr. Sham is joined by his wife Monica and daughter, Lilly. Outside of work, he enjoys hiking, aerial photography, and sailing.

**The Department of Surgery
welcomes our new pediatric surgery
clinical fellow, Dr. Matt Dellinger.**



Surgery News

PUBLICATIONS

Matthew Bartek, MD, MPH, General Surgery Chief Resident, published "**Improving Operating Room Efficiency: Machine Learning Approach to Predict Case-Time Duration**" in the Journal of the American College of Surgeons.



Dr. Bartek details "We started with a simple question: "Can we accurately predict how long an operation will take using preoperative information?" Answering this question has broad-reaching implications, given that operating room procedures account for a large portion of hospital revenue and cost. Our interdisciplinary team was a collaboration among anesthesiologists, data scientists, and residents in surgery and anesthesia which allowed us to address the problem with varied perspectives in mind. Using a novel institutional dataset provided by the Center for Perioperative & Pain Initiatives in Quality Safety Outcomes (PPIQSO) within the Department of Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine at UW, we modeled case-time duration, that is "wheels-in to wheels-out," for all planned operations at the UW over 4 years from January 2014 until December 2017. The novelty of our approach was that we restricted the prediction model to only those data available before the time of scheduling and we used a machine learning algorithm called XGBoost to generate several models against which we compared surgeons' own estimates, the scheduling standard. There was nearly a 25% improvement in accuracy (from 32% to 39%) when we modeled surgeons individually using the machine learning algorithm using a variety of patient, procedure and personnel information.

The strength of this study was our team: we worked collaboratively, meeting weekly to share ideas, review progress, and adjust our approach. In addition, practical implementation remained a focus of this project and Dr. Bala Nair, the senior author of the study, is working to create systems to improve case-time estimates at the University of Washington and beyond. As noted above, we started with a simple question but answering it involved complex data collection, modern statistical techniques, and perhaps most importantly, a multi-disciplinary collaboration."

HARKINS' CORNER



Dr. Nicole Zern

Dear UW Surgical Community,

This academic year is off to an incredible start with another successful Harkins Symposium for Resident Education and Harkins Society Alumni Reception at the American College of Surgeons (ACS)! Each year the Harkins Society recognizes the professional achievements and humanitarian services of one of our outstanding members. This year, nominated by Dr. **Farhood Farjah**, Endowed Chair in Lung Cancer Research and Associate Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and selected unanimously by our society leadership, the Harkins Society honored Dr. **Valerie Rusch** as our Distinguished Alumnus. She was also honored as the 2019 Strauss lecturer. Dr. Rusch completed her general and cardiothoracic surgery residencies at the University of Washington (UW). She was then a faculty member at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center before returning to the UW where she was on faculty for six years. She then joined the faculty at MSKCC where she has been since and currently holds the titles of Vice Chair of Clinical Research and Minor Family Chair in Intrathoracic Cancers. Dr. Rusch is the incoming President of the ACS where she has served on and Chaired the Board of Regents. Quotes from several Harkins member who were her co-residents, residents, or students:

"Dr. Rusch was my junior by two years during residency and even by then she had become a recognized leader. Her entire career has been one of leadership and superb patient care. She sets high standards for those around her but continually exceeds them for herself." -Dr. **Ron Maier**, Professor and Chief, Division of Trauma, Burn & Critical Care

"I remember Dr. Rusch as having tremendous ownership of her patients when she was the chief. She was always calm and in control regardless of the mayhem, codes, etc around her. Even then, the staff and patients deferred to her." -Dr. **Mika Sinanan**, Professor, Division of General Surgery

"Dr. Rusch's clinic was my favorite clinic to attend out of all of them in 5 years of training. She really went out of her way to make sure the resident's learned something, and often many things, from every patient she saw in clinic." -Dr. **Mark Meissner**, Professor, Division of Vascular Surgery

The annual banquet which follows the Harkins Symposium was held at Ivar's Salmon House on South Lake Union, during which we honored the 2019 Harkins Society Inductees and celebrated with fellow alumni including Dr. Rusch, pictured below with the inductees.



2019 Harkins Society Inductees: Matt Bartek, Navin Bhatia, Swaroop Bommareddi, Mert Calis, Brian Cook, Peter Edpao, Katherine Impastato, Colette Inaba, Abbie Jensen, Sarah Kolnik, Katie Liu, Vim Mahadev, Stephanie Mason, Shane Morrison, Trenton Morton, Amer Nassar, Anna Ohlsson, Rachel Payne, Lela Posey, Marko Rojnica, Joel Sternbach, Rebecca Ur, Francys Verdial, Jay Zhu

This fall also marked our annual alumni reception at the American College of Surgeons. This year we celebrated outgoing ACS President, Dr. **Ron Maier**. As always, our clinical fourth year general surgery residents were in attendance (pictured below with Dr. **Douglas Wood**), as well as other current and previous residents and fellows from our surgical training programs. We hope you will be able to join us next year in Chicago!



We continue to transition the structure of the Harkins Alumni Society to an automatic membership upon completion of any surgical training program at the UW, and have eliminated annual dues. As part of this effort, we are working to establish and maintain an inclusive email listserv to better communicate about our Harkins Society events. Please stay tuned for more updates later this year!

We hope to see you all next fall for the Harkins Symposium and in Chicago for the American College of Surgeons Reception!

Sincerely,

Nicole K. Zern MD, FACS
Harkins' Society President

2019 ANNUAL DR. ALFRED A. STRAUSS LECTURE AND HARKINS SYMPOSIUM



The Annual Dr. Alfred A. Strauss Lecture was held Friday, October 11, 2019 with invited lecturer Dr. **Valerie Rusch**. The event marked an incredible 70th year of this important event, and also served as a welcome home to Dr. Valerie W. Rusch, Vice Chair of Clinical Research for the Department of Surgery at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in New York, where she also holds the Miner Family Chair in Intrathoracic Cancers. Dr. Rusch completed her general and cardiothoracic surgery residencies here at UW and was later was on faculty here for six years. Her lecture was titled "The Thoracic Surgeon in 2030: A Paradigm for Surgical Evolution."

Dr. Rusch's career has been devoted to thoracic surgical oncology and clinical and translational research. She has been Principal Investigator for clinical trials with National Cancer Institute-sponsored Cooperative Groups, including LCGS, SWOG, RTOG, and ACOSOG, where she also held co- and vice-chair positions. She has chaired the NCI Cancer Clinical Investigations Review Committee, was a member of the NCI Lung Cancer Concept Evaluation Panel, and currently serves as Co-Chair of the NCI Thoracic Staging Malignancies Committee. Dr. Rusch is currently President-Elect of the American College of Surgeons, where she served on the Board of Regents from 2008 to 2017, and was its Chair from 2015-2016. She also currently serves on its Committee on Global Engagement.

Dr. Rusch is active with the American Board of Thoracic Surgery, the Society for Thoracic Surgeons, and the American Association for Thoracic Surgery. She is Chair of the Mesothelioma Domain of the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) International Staging and Prognostic Factors Committee, and is Chair-Elect of the Committee. She served as Chair of the Thoracic Committee for the American Joint Commission on Cancer 6th and 7th editions of the Cancer Staging Handbook, and as Chair of the Thoracic Expert Panel for the 8th edition.

Harkins Surgical Symposium Speakers

Dr. **Chris Burke**, Assistant Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, "Aortic Arch Surgery in the Modern Era"

Dr. **Lara Oyetunji**, Assistant Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, "Paradigm Shift in the Management of Symptomatic Severe Aortic Stenosis"

Dr. **Kevin Koomalsingh**, Assistant Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, "LVADs and Non-Cardiac Surgery"

Dr. **Kathleen Berfield**, Assistant Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, "Airway Complications in Lung Transplantation"

Dr. **Farhood Farjah**, Associate Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, "Benign Esophageal Perforation: Stent or Primary Repair?"

Dr. **Aaron Cheng**, Associate Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, "Management of Sternoclavicular Infections"

Dr. **Sherene Shalhub**, Associate Professor, Division of Vascular Surgery, "What Every Surgeon Should Know About Patients with Heritable Aortic Disease"

Dr. **Lena Sibulesky**, Associate Professor, Division of Transplant Surgery, "Expanding the Donor Pool: Machine Perfusion in Liver Transplantation"

Dr. **Giana Davidson**, Associate Professor, Division of General Surgery, Comparison of Surgery and Medicine on the Impact of Diverticulitis (COSMID) Trial

Dr. **Quyen Stevenson**, Preceptor, School of Nursing, "Management of Ostomy Complications"

Dr. **Deborah Marquardt**, Assistant Professor, VA Puget Sound Health Care System, "Intensive Nutritional Pathway Improves Outcomes for Esophageal Cancer Patients"

Dr. **Barclay Stewart**, Assistant Professor, Division of Trauma, Burn & Critical Care Surgery, "Growing the Global Footprint of UW Medicine Regional Burn Center"

Drs. **Imad Haque/Rebekah Devasahayam**, titles, "Surgical Simulation for Individual and Trauma team training-A military medical center model"

Dr. **Kay Johnson**, Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, "Perioperative Evaluation and Management of Patients with Cirrhosis"

Drs. **Elina Quiroga**, Associate Professor, Division of Vascular Surgery, **Kristine Calhoun**, Associate Professor, Division of General Surgery, Diversity and Inclusion Update

Dr. **Valerie Rusch**, Vice Chair for Clinical Research, Department of Surgery, Miner Family Chair in Intrathoracic Cancers, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, "Evolutions in the Treatment of Lung Cancer"

CLINICAL HIGHLIGHT—ROBOTIC SURGERY

Robot-assisted surgery involves a platform consisting of a high-definition 3D camera and mechanical arms controlled by the surgeon from a nearby console. Surgeons who use this system note enhanced visualization, precision, dexterity and ergonomics. Since its FDA approval in 2000, over 6 million procedures have been performed around the world. Within the Department of Surgery, robotic surgery is performed at three sites of practice – UW Medical Center (UWMC) Montlake Campus, UWMC Northwest Campus, and VA Puget Sound – and across multiple specialties: colorectal surgery, general surgery, hepatopancreatobiliary surgery, and thoracic surgery. Robotic surgery is additionally performed within the Departments of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynecology, and Urology. The benefits to patients undergoing a robotic surgical procedure are common across all disciplines and include less tissue trauma and blood loss with decreased risk of infectious complications, less pain with decreased narcotic medication needs, shorter length of hospital stay, and a faster return to work and daily activities. Says UW Medicine patient **Diana Davis**, who had robotic surgery to remove her liver cancer, “I walked two miles the day I had my surgery.”

On October 8, 2019, the UWMC Montlake Campus became a Center of Excellence in Robotic Surgery (COERS), making it the first academic medical center on the West Coast to attain this distinction. COERS accreditation is awarded through the Surgical Review Corporation, and requires that a multidisciplinary team of experts ensures top-notch patient care processes, facilities, equipment, staff, and quality and outcomes metrics for robotic surgical procedures. UWMC Montlake was awarded certification in record time thanks to its existing depth and breadth of robotic surgery expertise.

An important requisite of COERS accreditation and the academic mission of UWMC is the education of resident and fellow trainees, and to that end Department of Surgery has recently introduced a training curriculum for General Surgery residents which will make

them eligible for formal robotic surgery credentialing upon graduation. This training endeavor is supported in part by UW Medicine's WWAMI Institute of Simulation in Healthcare, and dedicated robotic training for the residents outside of clinical cases will be an important focus for future philanthropic efforts.

The Department would like to extend special thanks and recognition to the individuals who put significant time and effort into the certification process: Dr. **James Park**, Surgeon Champion and lead for this initiative; Carla Brannen, Assistant Administrator of Perioperative Services; Sherri Del Bene, Assistant Administrator, UW Medicine; Fatima Obaob, Urology/Robotic Surgery RN3; Natalie Shiflett, UWMC OR Nurse Manager; Amy Haverland, SE ICU Nurse Manager; Irene Krall, 7SA Nurse Manager; Stacy Nagy, Program Operations Specialist for HPB Surgery; and Esmeralda Pulido, Director of Project Management Office. Additional thanks goes to UWMC Executive Leadership for their support: Cindy Hecker, Chief Executive Officer; Geoff Austin, Chief Operating Officer; and Dr. John Lang, Clinical Director of Operative and Perioperative Operations, as well as other administrative and nursing staff too numerous to name.



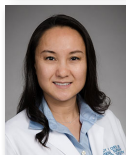
UW Receives COERS Accreditation Left-to-right: Amy Haverland, Sherri Del Bene, Natalie Shiflett, Fatima Obaob, Carla Brannen, Dr. James Park, Irene Krall, Stacy Nagy, Esmeralda Pulido, Dr. John Lang, Geoff Austin

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY—IN THE MEDIA



Dr. **Eileen Bulger**, Professor and Chief of Trauma, Division of Trauma, Burn & Critical Care Surgery
American College of Surgeons | Bulletin

“A comprehensive approach to firearm injury prevention: ACS Committee on Trauma hosts historic summit”



Dr. **Judy Chen**, Assistant Professor, Division of General Surgery
UW Medicine | Right as Rain | October, 10, 2019

“Is BMI Accurate – and What Does It Really Say About Your Health?”



Dr. **Meghan Flanagan**, Assistant Professor, Division of General Surgery
UW Medicine | Right as Rain | October 3, 2019

“What to Expect During Your Breast Biopsy”

#GettingToKnowDOS— Dr. Catherine Kling



In this issue, we had the pleasure to interview Dr. **Catherine Kling**. Dr. Kling joined the department in August 2018 and is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Transplant Surgery.

SS: What do you consider to be the best decision you've ever made?

CK: Probably marrying my husband. He's not in medicine so he does a good job of keeping me balanced. He's also much less serious than I am—more of a joker so he keeps the fun side of me alive as well.

SS: What do you consider to be the worst decision you've ever made?

CK: Trying 400 Degrees Hot Chicken in Nashville. It turns out that you can sweat from more places in your body than I ever knew!

SS: Where is your hometown?

CK: I grew up in Melbourne, Australia. My accent is mostly gone but you can make it out a little bit when I say anything with an O or A. I lived in Melbourne, Australia until I was 16 then moved to Tokyo, Japan where I lived for three years. Then I moved to the U.S. in 2000 for college and medical school, then married my husband.

SS: What do you miss about Melbourne?

CK: My parents, brothers and extended family are there as well as a few friends so it's the people I miss. We go back once every other year or so for visits. It's a very long trip: you've got to first get from here to either San Francisco

or Los Angeles then it's about 15 hours to Melbourne. With just myself and my husband it's not an issue, but now we have two kids. My five-year-old has done it twice and she has been great. Now with my one-year-old, we'll see-- she's not good at sitting still.

SS: Which life achievements are you most proud of?

CK: My two daughters are pretty great. Hannah's five and Hazel just turned one. I had Hannah my fourth year of residency and I had Hazel my first year as an attending. Despite all of the long hours, the fellowship training, etc., they've turned out to be pretty good kids despite me not always being there. That goes back to my best decision, which is my husband, who takes on raising the kids and doing household things such as cooking and cleaning because I'm at work a lot.

SS: What was your least favorite class subject in high school?

CK: History. [Laughs] I think in some ways this is related to being a surgeon. I like physical things—the things that you can see and visualize. History was just these random dates and occurrences and that's hard for me to get my mind around.

The school I went to in Japan was called the American School in Japan and all students had to take American history in 11th grade. My best friend, who was from New Zealand, and I petitioned the school saying this requirement was ridiculous. Why do we have to take American history when we weren't American, don't live in America and never plan to live in America? They said no, we had to take the class, and my friend and I actually ended up receiving a history award that year. Now 20 years later here I am living in the United States, and she actually lived here for five years also!



Catherine with her husband and two daughters in the Methow Valley



Catherine with her parents at residency graduation

SS: Who has made the biggest impact in your life and why?

CK: Probably my parents. They provided a very supportive environment for my brothers and I, but more than that, they let us make many of our own decisions (with some oversight of course). But it was really up to us. I remember when I was graduating from high school in Japan, I had the choice to go to university in Australia or come to the United States. I didn't know what to do and wasn't sure if I was going to go into medicine at that point so my dad said, you have an opportunity to make whatever decision you want. If you go to the United States and it doesn't work out, you can always come back to Australia. I don't know if when he said that 20-some years ago he realized that I would still be here with his only grandkids. [Laughs] But there was no pressure. My parents gave us lots of opportunities and allowed us to make our own decisions and supported us along the way with however it ended up.

SS: What is your favorite Amazon purchase?

CK: I don't know if this was actually purchased on Amazon but it's my favorite purchase. I get really, really cold. Like really cold. So my husband bought the equivalent of the Bair Huggers we use in the OR for our home bed. So before I go to bed, I turn the Bair Hugger on, brush my teeth, wash my face, then get into bed and it's toasty warm.

SS: Tell us something about yourself that nobody knows.

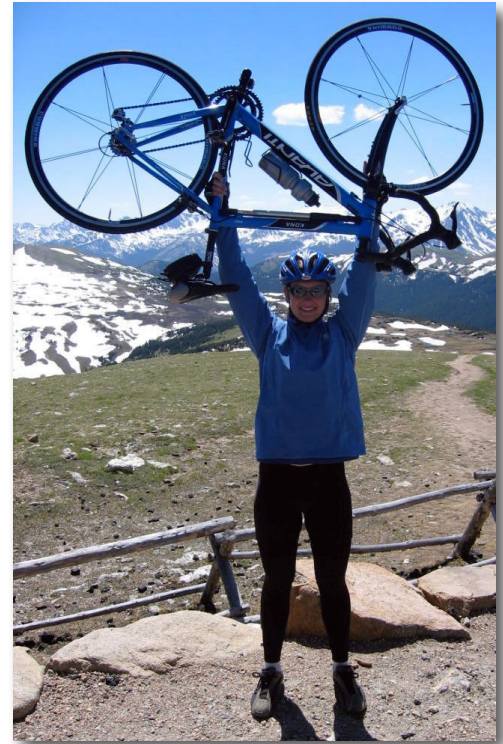
CK: I've ridden my bike across the country twice. The first time was in 2003 and the second time was in 2005. It was a fundraising trip for an organization called Bike and Build to raise money for and awareness of affordable housing causes. You raise money throughout the year then over the summer there is an eight or nine-week trip where you ride approximately 70 miles a day. Then maybe one day a week you stop and work on a Habitat build site or some other affordable housing project. The group then decides how to distribute the money it raised through grants to different affordable housing organizations that have applied. The first ride was from Maine to Vancouver, Canada and then the second ride was from Virginia Beach to Cannon Beach. It's an annual event that is still going today. The second time I did it I was one of the leaders. You have to set up all the housing along the way and then you drive a 15-passenger van with a trailer so you're not carrying all your stuff. It was pretty spectacular.

SS: What do you consider to be the biggest challenge in your life that you had to overcome?

CK: I didn't really see it as a challenge at that time but I think in hindsight, it was. I was 18 or 19 years old when I moved to the United States. I didn't know anybody here and I didn't have any family here and I went to Dartmouth, which is a small town in the middle of nowhere in New Hampshire. I had to build my support network there from the ground up in college and then when I went on to medical school—expanding my community and network as I went along.

Now my community in the United States is far bigger than in Australia. I didn't see it as a big choice, decision or something that I really had to overcome, but looking back now that I have kids, it's like, would I really send my kid halfway across the

world with no one there? I guess that's again going back to my parents letting me make my own decisions and figuring it out along the way.



Catherine at the top of Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park - 12,183 feet!

UW Medicine

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY



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