

PETER NELIGAN RETIRES



On January 1, 2021, after a distinguished career in plastic surgery, Dr. Peter Neligan retired from active clinical and academic practice. Born in Ireland, he attended Trinity College at the University of Dublin, where he also obtained his medical degree and initial training in plastic surgery. In 1983, he moved to Toronto to complete fellowships in burns, microvascular surgery, pediatric

plastic surgery and surgical research. He joined the plastic surgery faculty at the University of Toronto in 1991 where he went on to have a prodigious career, eventually becoming Chief and leading the largest plastic surgery program in North America. Peter and I became friends at the beginning of our careers, through the Plastic Surgery Research Council, and wound up working together through many national and international plastic surgery organizations.

Fortunately for us, the University of Toronto has a 10-year tenure limit for Chiefs, so when Peter's tenure was coming up and he was already one of the most respected academic plastic surgeons in the world, I was fortunate to be able to recruit him to the UW in 2007 to lead the fledgling UWMC plastic surgery service that was developing after Drs. Isik and Cole had left for private practice. Drs. David Mathes and Hakim Said had just arrived at UW Medical Center (UWMC), fresh out of training, and Peter saw in them the seeds to build a truly world class microsurgery program at



Peter and his wife Gabrielle

UWMC, which he did. We were fortunate to have the strong support of Dr. Carlos Pellegrini, Department of Surgery Chair 1993–2015, Lisa Brandenburg, CEO of UWMC at the time, and the support of Dr. George Larrimore, Chair of Radiation Oncology who quickly



Peter with the 6-volume Plastic Surgery textbook set

hired Peter's wife, Dr. Gabrielle Kane, who went on to become Program Director of the Radiation Oncology residency program.

Under Peter's guidance and leadership, we established the Center for Reconstructive Microsurgery, which now enjoys one of the largest reconstructive microsurgery teams in the nation with seven full-time, fellowship-trained reconstructive microsurgeons and a leading microsurgery fellowship. Besides editing THE textbook of "Plastic Surgery" including three editions, with the longest tenure of any editor of that text ever, he published over 240 peer-reviewed articles, 85 chapters, 10 books and taught over 230 CME courses. He has been President of numerous national organizations, including the North American Skull Base Society, the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery, and the Plastic Surgery Foundation of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. He has been an invited speaker at numerous universities and international plastic surgery organizations around the world. At the time of his retirement, I truly believe that he was the most renown, recognized, and respected academic plastic surgeon in the world. We were truly blessed to have him as part of our UW plastic surgery family.

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Peter is truly a “renaissance” plastic surgeon, unfazed at taking on the most complex surgical problems, from devastatingly complex neurofibromas of the face to microsurgical facial reanimation to microlymphatic reconstruction with 12-0 suture. No matter how difficult things got, Peter was always unflappable with the famous “Neliganism”: “It’ll be fine.” His incredible skill and composure made him a superlative teacher, as all of our residents and fellows can attest to, and many of our faculty, myself included.

Outside of his incredible career, Peter is well known for his fabulous guitar and piano skills and has even helped organize annual jam sessions at national conferences. Upon retirement, he and his wife relocated to sunny Phoenix and they plan to spend more time with their children and grandchildren in Toronto once the border is reopened. Although we are deeply saddened to see Peter leave, he had an incredibly important and enduring impact on our program and he will always continue to be a part of our UW family as Professor Emeritus. The residents, faculty and staff of the UW plastic surgery program thank Dr. Neligan for his years of service, education, kindness and incredible stories. He is truly “irreplicable” and is sorely missed.

Nicholas B. Vedder, MD
Professor of Surgery & Orthopaedics
Jamie A. Hunter Endowed Chair
Chief, Division of Plastic Surgery
Vice Chair, Department of Surgery

MARK BRAKSTAD RETIRES



After 28 years as a general surgeon, Dr. Mark T. Brakstad retired from University of Washington (UW) Department of Surgery on June 30, 2020. He was born in Montana and received his chemistry degree from Montana State University in Bozeman in 1979. He attended medical school at the University of Washington, where he met and married Susan, one of his medical school classmates. They eventually had two sons and a daughter, Jonathan, Markus, and Alex, who are all young adults now.

After medical school, Dr. Brakstad completed a Pediatric residency at Children’s Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1986, then a General Surgery residency at the University of Iowa in 1991. He then returned to Seattle where he did pediatric research at Children’s Hospital and Medical Center from 1991-1993, and also worked as an ER physician at Olympic Memorial Hospital in Port Angeles from 1991-1994.

From 1993-1995, Mark became a solo general surgeon, practicing out of NW Hospital. Since he was the 18th general surgeon at the Hospital, no one thought he could build a solo practice. He proved them all wrong, working tirelessly and reportedly prowling about the ER often. Mark then joined Northwest Surgical Specialists in 1995, which was a private practice group and part of Proliance Surgeons. When Northwest Hospital was acquired by the University of Washington in 2010, and in 2013, Northwest Surgical Specialists started working with surgical and family practice residents, Mark became a Clinical Associate Professor in Department of Surgery. Mark served as Northwest Hospital’s Chief of Staff from 2001-2003



Celebrating Mark as 2012 Care Award Honoree

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