**Dr. Nicole Gibran Retires**

**Dr. Ron Maier, Professor & Chief**  
**Kira Martin, Administrator**  
**Division of Trauma, Burn & Critical Care Surgery**

Dr. Nicole Gibran, Professor, Division of Trauma, Burn and Critical Care Surgery, retired on July 31st, 2021. It was hard for me to see her go, to imagine Harborview Medical Center and the UW Medicine Regional Burn Center without her, even though she gave us two years’ notice and stayed even longer to tie up loose ends at R&T! I think this was the case with many of us, really each of us who have worked closely with her – whether fellow faculty, administrative staff, UW Regional Burn Center multidisciplinary team members, residents, fellows, researchers or visiting scholars. She left an indelible impression on each person she interacted with, every patient and family member she cared for. Dr. Gibran instilled fear, awe, admiration and
ultimately love and respect in those that were fortunate enough
to benefit from her tutelage, her at times scathing (yet on point)
feedback, her wit and her unwavering dedication and passion
for excellence, innovation and achievement in her profession
and in her daily work.

We influence people every day by what we say and do, by what
we write, create and share. And all of that influence adds up.
Dr. Gibran has gained most of her creativity and energy from
her husband, Dr. Frank Isik, and her two sons, Alexander and
Oliver; from these individuals she has learned her most valuable
life lessons. When asked what she is most proud of, Dr. Gibran
shared, “By far my most significant accomplishment is my children
who are kind, caring and on their respective career paths. After
that I would say that I am most proud of team building. Whether
it be in the burn center, the R&T radiation remediation project or
the ABA Burn Quality consensus project (which launched the ABA
BQIP program) I have managed to bring people who otherwise have
different priorities and viewpoints to work as a team.”

Dr. Gibran completed her MD degree at Boston University
School of Medicine and continued through her surgery residency
at Boston University. She completed Burn and Intensive
Care, NIH Post-Doctoral Trauma and Burns, and Northwest
Burn Foundation Research Fellowships at the University of
Washington. Dr. Gibran’s independent professional career has
been in the UW Medicine Department of Surgery and the UW
Medicine Regional Burn Center at Harborview Medical Center,
which she directed since 2002. Dr. Gibran ran a very successful
NIH-funded research program at Harborview throughout her
career (26 years of continuous federal funding is nothing to
sneeze at!), allowing her to provide research experiences for
many undergraduate students, medical students, residents
and fellows as they launched their own careers. She has been
deeply committed to the culture and work of the Harborview
community for the entirety of her professional life.

Dr. Gibran’s clinical expertise is in burn injury, critical care,
and wound healing. Her research includes genetic influences on
scarring and long-term recovery after burn injury. She served
as the President of the American Burn Association (ABA) and
on the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma
and the Board of the NTI. In 2018 Dr. Gibran announced her
decision to step down as the Director of the Regional Burn
Center and from patient care activities to focus on research,
accepting the position of Associate Dean for Research and
Graduate Education, Harborview Medical Center. “Transitioning
from Director of the UW Medicine Regional Burn Center to Associate
Dean for Research was never something that I imagined. I welcome
the opportunity to engage with faculty and administration to
enrich and highlight our exemplary Harborview Medical Center
based research programs.” Little did she know then that her
new position would catapult her into an intense, stressful
and unrelenting multi-year response to a radiation leak at
the Harborview Research & Training (R&T) building on May
3rd, 2019, heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on
research activities across all UW campuses.

Top: 1992 submitted by Marcia Usui, Dr. Gibran’s ‘lab mom’ – “You
constantly juggled SO many hats and impacted so many young minds!”

Bottom: submitted by May Reed – “This is going WAAAAAY back, but
hopefully this picture reminds you of fun times in the Sage Lab as
postdocs. I still don’t know how you managed to always look so nice!”
Over 200 research employees and 35 Principal Investigators and their labs were required to relocate. An article published in The Stranger summarizes, “Dozens of PIs across UW’s sprawling campus volunteered to share their lab space with displaced researchers. Gibran has tried to match R&T researchers with other PIs doing similar work to ensure they’ll have the necessary equipment. But these shared lab spaces still needed equipment and biological samples that were trapped inside the R&T building. Gibran worked with the DOE and cleanup crews to schedule escorted trips inside the building so researchers could grab what they needed to get started. Employees had only 90 minutes.”

Dr. Gibran worked tirelessly for two years to manage the aftermath, transition and reopening of the R&T building. Her distinct personality traits—unwavering dedication, no nonsense leadership, clear communication and an unrelenting drive for excellence, allowed the research communities at Harborview to survive the shut-down, recover and ultimately start to thrive again, during a period of unbelievable tumultuousness and uncertainty.

In closing, I would like to highlight several notes, memories and thoughts on Dr. Gibran shared by the many individuals she deeply and positively impacted over the years. Her current transition has triggered memories of her career over the years. She states, “I had the privilege of knowing so many patients and their families who trusted me to care for them. And that feels like an honor. In my garden I have three welded garden frogs that a grateful patient made for me - I shared two more with Beth Costa whom he also appreciated. For me they represent constant reminder of my clinical contributions.”

“Thank you so much for navigating these past two tumultuous years when R&T went down, the pandemic hit, and bringing the building back online again. Your straightforward communication and leadership have been a godsend for me in trying to herd the cats back into building again. I really could not have done it without your help. I’ll miss the leadership and tenacity you brought to the table within the School of Medicine.” – Kim Wisecup, Manager, Space Planning & Management, Office of Facilities, UW Medicine

“Thank you for your tremendous example, leadership, and devotion to teaching and mentorship as just one piece of your amazing career. You were the first faculty member to interview me so many years ago and have provided such sage advice many times over the years that has aided me and my career.” – Dr. Deborah Marquardt, Assistant Professor, VA Puget Sound Health Care System

“A few years back when I first saw you do a burn case, I thought: “Wow! This person knows the value of doing things as well as they can be done. Your attention to detail in the OR, the lab and in the conference room has served the Burn Community and more importantly, our patients well.” – Dr. Hugh Foy, Professor Emeritus, Department of Surgery

“I’ve always appreciated your candor, sense of humor, and ability to get things done.” – Mike Stanislaus, Director, School of Medicine, Chief Business Office

“I am thankful to have worked with you both as a trainee and as a colleague. I learned a tremendous amount from you, much of which is now incorporated into my own teaching. Your pioneering path in burns and more recently in the rehab of the R&T building has been inspiring to witness. Thank you so much for your time, your teaching and your honest and unvarnished takes on the world around you.” – Dr. Jeffrey Friedrich, Professor, Division of Plastic Surgery

“We R&T investigators were well served by your surgeon instincts, taking command of the situation, making quick decisions, and getting things done. You were an exemplary leader, and our many thanks don’t do justice to the job that you did.” – Dr. Nick Poolos, Professor, Department of Neurology

“I have watched you with awe as you have succeeded as a surgeon, scientist, clinician, administrator and leader. Our interactions and collaborations were always productive and fun.” – Dr. John Olerud, Professor Emeritus, Department of Dermatology