



The Penn Surgery Society News is published quarterly for its members, colleagues and friends of the Department of Surgery. For submissions, inquiries or comments, please contact clyde.barker@penmedicine.upenn.edu.

Message from the Chair

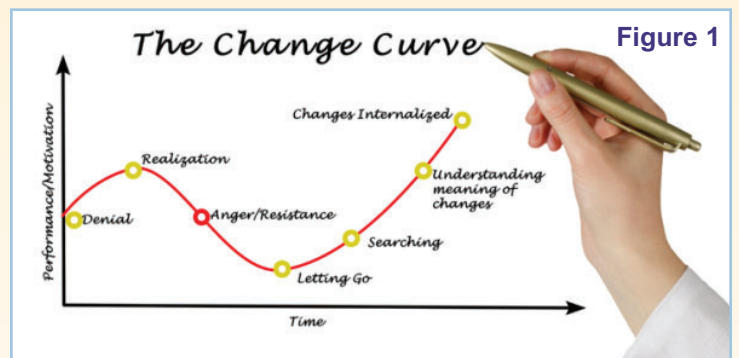
Change Management

Recently, the Department of Surgery underwent a planned review. The last review occurred in 2014. The internal review involved multiple subcommittees, which interviewed over 60 individuals from the department and health system. Subsequently, the external review was then conducted by three Surgery Chairs who were invited from other institutions. Preparing for the review prompted Division and Department leadership to document the changes that have been implemented over the last 5 years, assess present issues, and develop future plans and goals. Regular reviews should really occur in all parts of a matrixed healthcare organization to stimulate reflection and change. The Dean has recently launched the School of Medicine Strategic Plan 3.0.

Overall, both reviews were highly favorable. There were several actionable suggestions. One was to distribute leadership roles more broadly, particularly across faculty rank. Having individuals holding more than one major role should be avoided. Another idea that particularly resonated was to ask for self-nominations for leadership positions, such as Vice Chairs. This is common for national societies and makes perfect sense locally. Consequently, this strategy is currently being employed to fill the opening for the Vice Chair of Clinical Research. The external committee recommended an Executive Vice Chair, which was already in progress. Rachel Kelz, with her familiarity of Penn, unique perspective, and energy will greatly expand what we can accomplish at the Department level. While our educational system was rated as outstanding, the reviewers urged us to inno-

vate in our approach to education. There are considerable opportunities in this space. Lastly, our mentoring system needs improvement, particularly for the newest faculty.

The phrase “Change Management” is commonly used in business, particularly as it relates to the human factors involved in modifying an organization. In the mid 1900s, the social psychologist Kurt Lewin introduced three states of change – unfreezing the current state, moving, and then refreezing. Without question, introducing changes is disruptive. Evolution has seemingly programmed mankind to resist change because it is uncomfortable and instills uncertainty. Note the resemblance of Change Management to the Five Stages of Grief (Figures 1 and 2). Undoubtedly, it would take less administrative effort to maintain the status quo in the Department. However, the journalist Gail Sheehy claimed, “If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living.” The Greek philosopher



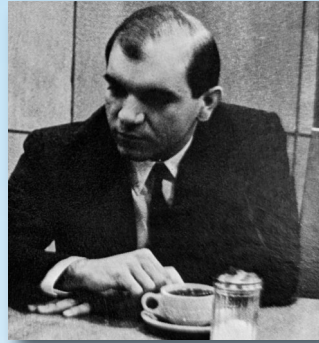
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From the Editor
Clyde F. Barker, M.D.

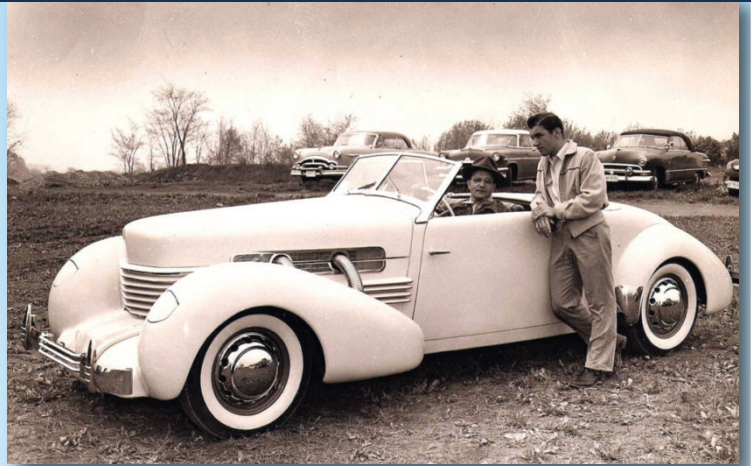
A recent obituary in the Inquirer caught my eye and called attention to a largely forgotten phase of our department's history. Fred Simeone, the subject of the lengthy obit, was a Penn surgeon for 48 years, about half of it as a member of the Department of Surgery and half in Neurosurgery after it became an independent department in 1997.



**HUP resident
 Fred Simeone**

After medical school at Temple, internship at PGH and one year at the Mayo Clinic, he was a resident in general surgery and neurosurgery at Penn from 1963-65. Since I was also a resident at that time, we knew each other, although our contact was limited to conversations during coffee breaks or dinner at the hospital dining room. I also saw him at Harrison Department meetings where he often presented his research on cerebrovascular vasospasm. After his training, Fred became a Penn faculty member and eventually a full professor. While I was chairman, he was a member of my department and chief of neurosurgery at Pennsylvania Hospital.

What interested the Inquirer was not Simeone's distinguished academic career or that he served as a major in the US Army or that he



Simeone's father, Dr. Anthony Simeone, in his 1937 Cord, fostered young Fred's automotive passion at an early age.

was knighted by the President of Italy. Instead, the Inquirer was interested in his hobby. His father fancied old sports cars and in 1972 Fred inherited four of them. Over the next several decades, he enlarged the collection to 75 of the world's most famous racing sports cars, cars that had won races at Le Mans and other venues. He restored his cars to working condition so that he could drive many of them. He established the Simeone Foundation Auto Museum in Southwest Philadelphia, and in 2008 he donated it to Philadelphia for public display. Many consider his sports car museum to be the world's best. His book describing it, *The Stewardship of Historically Important Automobiles*, was named publication of the year by the International Historic Motoring Awards in 2013.



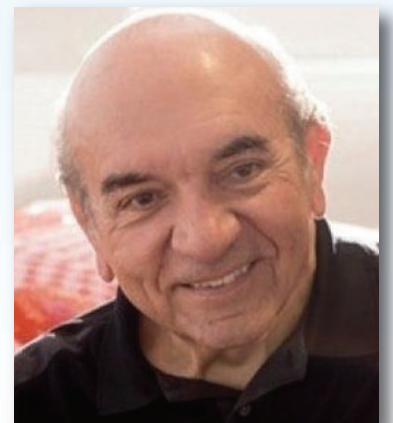
Simeone Foundation Automotive Museum

Whether or not newsletter readers care about sports cars, recalling the career of Fred Simeone is a useful reminder of the importance played by neurosurgeons in the development of our department. Another one such leader was Charles Frazier.

(continued on page 3)



Fred Simeone with his 1937 Alfa Romeo



From the Editor . . . *(continued from page 2)*

Charles Harrison Frazier was born in 1872 to one of Philadelphia's prominent and wealthy families. He obtained his MD from Penn in 1892, was an intern at HUP and Episcopal Hospital from 1893-94 and then as a member of the Penn faculty became a busy general surgeon. Less than ten years later at age 32, he was appointed Dean of the medical school. As an aggressive and ambitious young Dean, he recognized that Penn was lagging behind in academic activities and especially in research. He formulated a plan to completely overhaul the faculty, to abruptly dismiss many honored but aging faculty members and to replace them not with established Philadelphia clinical practitioners but with young outsiders with promising research credentials, outsiders from Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston and other universities. He thought he knew how to make this plan work, by enlisting the help of his uncle, the University's Provost. It almost did. Frazier recruited, appointed and brought to Philadelphia several of his chosen, young academic stars. Frazier's plan for a research-oriented school was decades ahead of its time. Penn wasn't ready for it yet. Led by the chief of surgery, the conservative, private practice-oriented faculty fought back, halted and reversed this endeavor and sent the newcomers home.

Frazier was badly embarrassed, resigned as Dean and felt that his academic career was ended. He fell back on his large practice of general surgery and at the same time began to take an increasing interest in the new field of brain surgery, working with the chairman of neurology, William Spiller.

Ten years later in 1918, though still smarting over his reform's collapse, Frazier had recovered his composure and was a comfortable but not powerful member of the Department of Surgery. At this time, J.B. Deaver was the chairman and he decided to reorganize the department. As faculty surgeons returned from their WWI wartime service, Deaver was obsessed with maintaining his huge practice of abdominal surgery. To prevent returning surgeons



Charles Harrison Frazier
Dean of the Medical School at age 23

from encroaching on this practice, he assigned other body parts to them, for example trauma, fractures, anorectal or other types of surgery. To Frazier, he gave the parts above the clavicle, forbidding him to operate below this. From then on, Frazier focused mainly on brain surgery, but one type of general surgery he continued to do was thyroid. He developed a thyroid clinic, a thyroid fellowship and a busy thyroid practice of his own which grew to about 300 thyroidectomies per year. Being forced to concentrate on brain surgery Frazier became a leader in the field, virtually equivalent to Cushing's pioneering position in Baltimore and Boston.

But this was not the end of the story. In 1922 Charles Frazier was appointed chairman

of the Department of Surgery at Penn, serving until his death in 1936. He proved to be one of the most important leaders of the department. He recruited from Graduate Hospital the young I.S. to become his assistant and HUP's second-in-command. In 1927 he sent Ravdin to England for a year of research, which was the genesis of Penn as a modern research department.

For more on the career and importance of Charles Frazier, read the upcoming book on the history of the Department of Surgery.

Frazier as John Rhea
Barton Professor
and Chairman of
the Department of
Surgery 1922-1936



Pat Reilly to Step Down as Chief

Patrick M. Reilly, MD, FCCP, FACS has decided to step down September 1, 2023 as Chief of the Division of Traumatology, Surgical Critical Care, and Emergency Surgery. A search for his successor will commence in early 2023.

Dr. Reilly graduated from Notre Dame and then attended Jefferson Medical College. He was a resident in General Surgery at The Medical Center of Delaware and completed a research fellowship at John Hopkins. He was a fellow in Trauma and Critical Care at Penn and then joined our faculty in 1995. He was promoted to Professor in 2009 and was appointed as Division Chief in 2011. He became the C. William Schwab Professor in the Division of Traumatology, Surgical Critical Care, and Emergency Surgery in 2017.

He has had an illustrious career, with about 150 invited lectures and over 200 published articles. He has won numerous teaching awards, including a Penn Pearl. His clinical excellence



Pat Reilly

has been acknowledged with the Louis Duhring Outstanding Clinical Specialist Award, selection for the inaugural class of the Academy of Master Clinicians, and election to the American Surgical Association. Dr. Reilly has been a major national leader - he was President of the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST) and will be the President of the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma (AAST) starting in September 2023.

Dr. Reilly is a consummate leader. His division is a premier group in the country and has trained many leaders in the field. His management style is exceptional. He is humble, forthright, and incredibly well organized. He has a comprehensive understanding of finances. Dr. Reilly has advocated for his constituents while appreciating the balance of departmental needs. He is the quintessence of Penn Surgery.

Ali Naji Appointed Jonathan Rhoads Endowed Chair II

Dr. DeMatteo has announced that Ali Naji, MD, PhD, is the inaugural recipient of the second Jonathan Rhoads endowed chair. For the previous 28 years he held the J. William White chair of surgical research.

Dr. Naji has been at Penn for more than 50 years. He did his General Surgery Residency here as well as a Fellowship in Vascular Surgery. He obtained a PhD in Immunology from Penn in 1981, after which he was appointed to the faculty. He has previously held numerous departmental leadership roles, including Vice Chair of Research and Surgical Director of the Kidney-Transplant Program.

His research has focused on diabetes and immunological tolerance. He collaborated for many years with Dr. Clyde Barker and has one first author and two senior author papers in Science. Dr. Naji's groundbreaking work on the immunology of diabetes has unraveled new mechanisms of immune tolerance. For instance, he demonstrated that the thymus plays an essen-



Ali Naji

tial role in regulating the maintenance and loss of immune tolerance to tissue-specific antigens, autoimmune diseases and transplantation. In addition to his seminal work, Dr. Naji was one of the earliest and strongest advocates of islet transplantation for the treatment of Type 1 diabetes. He established the islet isolation facility at Penn. His surgical attempts to extend the Edmonton protocol for islet transplantation were among the earliest such efforts in the United States, which have since borne fruit in a successful Phase 3 clinical trial and a Biologics License Application to the FDA for approval of islet transplantation as a first line therapeutic option in Type 1 diabetes.

He has received a multitude of NIH grants and is currently the most federally funded surgeon in the country. He leads a U01 and a UC4, and is multi-PI on an R01 and another U01. Under Dr. Naji's leadership, the Human Pancreas Analysis Program (HPAP) was made possible by a \$12 million grant from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). He has had uninterrupted funding from the NIH for over 30 years. His total cumulative funding is incalculable, but our estimate is \$80 million. He has published over 320 articles and has an H-index of 63. He has received numerous

(continued on page 5)

Ali Naji *(continued from page 4)*

awards, including the prestigious Thomas E. Starzl Prize in Surgery and Immunology. He has served on 5 separate NIH study sections.

His passion for teaching and research is boundless. He is an expert Kidney/Pancreas/Islet transplant surgeon and an outstanding teacher in the operating room and on the floors. He has won

2 Penn Pearls. He has mentored many surgical trainees who have become prominent academic surgeons, including Jim Markmann, Ken Brayman, Andrew Posselt, Howard Song, Jonathan Bromberg, John Odorico, and Rob Redfield.

Overall, Dr. Naji is a superior clinician, outstanding investigator, and relentless teacher/mentor.

Doug Fraker to Step Down as Division Chief

Douglas Fraker, MD will step down as Chief of the Endocrine and Oncologic Surgery Division once a search for his successor concludes. Dr. Fraker has had an extraordinary career. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin (summa cum laude) and then received his medical degree from Harvard (magna cum laude). He trained in General Surgery at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), during which he spent 3 years as a clinical and research fellow at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). After residency, he joined the faculty at the Surgery Branch of the NCI and quickly became the Head of the Surgical Metabolism Section.

In December 1995, Dr. Fraker was recruited to Penn to be the Chief of the A Service (now known as the Endocrine and Oncology Service (EOS)). He held numerous other leadership roles in the department, including the Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs (2002-09) and the Vice Chair for Research (2009-17). He has had leading roles in the Abramson Cancer Center and was Deputy Director for Clinical Affairs for many years.

His research focused on the regional therapy of cancer. He directed 7 clinical trials and had R01, P01, and T32 funding for these clinical studies. He was the only surgeon in the United States doing isolated limb perfusion for melanoma and sarcoma using tumor necrosis factor. He was the global leader in performing isolated hepatic perfusion with tumor necrosis factor for diffuse metastatic cancers. He led the world in the application of photodynamic therapy for intraperitoneal surface malignancies. He has published over 300 papers and 80 chapters, and has delivered hundreds of lectures. Dr. Fraker was a major leader in the American College of Surgeons Oncology Group, serving as Deputy Chair and then Chair of the Melanoma Working Group. He was the Vice President of the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons. He is a member of the American Surgical Association and the Society of Clinical Surgery, and is a Section



Doug Fraker

Editor for the Annals of Surgical Oncology.

Dr. Fraker has earned numerous awards. He has won 5 departmental awards for teaching and received 3 Penn Pearls. He is a perennial Top Doctor listed in Philadelphia Magazine. Of course, he was ranked in the Top 100 Golfer Doctors in the United States in 2006 by Golf Digest.

When Dr. Fraker arrived at Penn, there were only 2 other surgeons in the division – Brian Czerniecki, whom he brought from the NCI, and Mike Torosian, who left soon thereafter. Dr.

Fraker recruited Frank Spitz from MD Anderson in 1997. Over time, Dr. Fraker expanded EOS to over 20 surgeons across our multiple institutions. His proudest accomplishment is the legacy that he has established by building one of the most outstanding groups of academic surgical oncologists in the country. The division's evidence-based clinical practice of highly complex cases, scholarly productivity, and cumulative teaching awards reflects the performance of this surgical team. He has been fully committed to training Penn residents and therefore did not create a fellowship in Surgical Oncology.

Without question, Dr. Fraker is one of the hardest working surgeons in existence. He is typically the first at work. His memory is uncanny and somehow, he recalls even minor details. He has a true talent for identifying talent – both in medical student applicants to the residency program and in selecting faculty members. Another gift is his ability to ferret out the truth at M&M. It is rare for a surgeon to completely master so many different operations – partial hepatectomy, pancreatectomy, adrenalectomy, limb perfusion, sarcoma resection (limb, retroperitoneal, and abdominal), breast surgery, melanoma resection, thyroidectomy, and parathyroidectomy, among others. Dr. Fraker is everyone's hero. Luckily, he will continue to operate, which means that there are still many "Fraker Fridays" to come.

Ronald DeMatteo

Omaida Velazquez Elected to National Academy of Medicine

During its 2022 annual meeting the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) announced the election of 90 regular members and 10 international members. Omaida Velazquez was among those elected. Membership in the Academy is one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine and recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievement and commitment to service.

Academy President Victor Dzau said, “This extraordinary class of new members is comprised of exceptional scholars and leaders who have been at the forefront of responding to serious public health challenges, combating social inequities, and achieving innovative discoveries.”

New members are elected by current members through a process that recognizes individuals who have made major contributions to the advancement of the medical sciences, health care, and public health. At least one-quarter of the membership is selected from fields outside the health professions — for example, from such fields as law, engineering, social sciences, and the humanities.

Established originally as the Institute of Medicine in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine addresses critical issues in health, science, medicine, and related policy and inspires positive actions across sectors.

In naming Omaida to membership, the Academy provided the following citation.

“Omaida C. Velázquez, MD, FACS, David Kimmelman Endowed Chair in Vascular and Endovascular Surgery and profes-



Omaida Velazquez

sor of surgery, departments of biochemistry and molecular biology and of radiology, and chair, DeWitt Daughtry Family Department of Surgery, Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami; and surgeon-in-chief, University of Miami Health System and Jackson Memorial Hospital Health System, Miami. For pioneering research that identified E-selectin as a membrane-bound adhesion molecule that induces pro-angiogenesis and healing, in a vascular medicine field where previously only soluble factors had been considered therapeutic candidates. Her groundbreaking work ushered a paradigm-shifting platform to reverse tissue damage by arterial occlusion or diabetes.”

Omaida was HUP chief resident in 1997-1998.

She was also a vascular fellow at HUP in 1999 and a faculty member of Ron Fairman’s vascular and endovascular division from 1999 to 2007.

Recruited to the University of Miami in 2007 as chief of vascular surgery, she advanced rapidly to become chair of the department of surgery in 2015.

Omaida is one of only a small number of surgeon members of the Society of Clinical Investigation as well as a member of the Society of University Surgeons and the American Surgical Association.

In 2015 she was honored as a Distinguished Graduate of our department. Her latest honor is to have an endowed professorship at the University of Miami named for her.

Message from the Chair *(continued from page 1)*

Heraclitus argued that nature itself changes incessantly with, “The only constant in life is change.” Proactive change was also encouraged by the German physicist Georg Lichtenberg - “I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better.” Thus, since changes are really experiments, we need to expect that some of the changes made in the Department may not succeed. Of course, there is not total agreement on change. The French

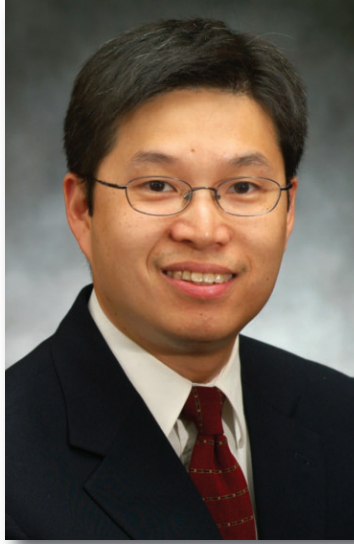
critic Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr countered, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” However, Benjamin Franklin (as usual) appears to be the most accurate with “When you’re finished changing, you’re finished.”

Wilson Szeto Appointed Julian Johnson Endowed Professor II

Dr. DeMatteo has announced the appointment of Wilson Szeto, MD as the second Julian Johnson endowed chair. This new chair was created by splitting an existing endowed professorship.

Dr. Szeto attended the University of Virginia and received his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia, where he was inducted into Alpha Omega Alpha. He did his General Surgery residency, Cardiothoracic residency, and Endovascular/Aortic Surgery fellowship at Penn. He won a Penn Pearl and the Leonard Perloff Chief Resident Teaching Award. In 2006, he joined the Penn faculty in the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery and was promoted to full Professor in 2016. In 2015, he became the Chief of Cardiovascular Surgery at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center. He was appointed in 2017 as the Vice Chief of Clinical Operations and Quality in the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery.

Dr. Szeto is an international leader in cardiovascular surgery, with a focus on the surgical treatment of thoracic aortic disease and valvular heart disease. His research also includes the development of innovative catheter-based therapies in these areas. He has been a National Principal Investigator, site Principal Investigator,



Wilson Szeto

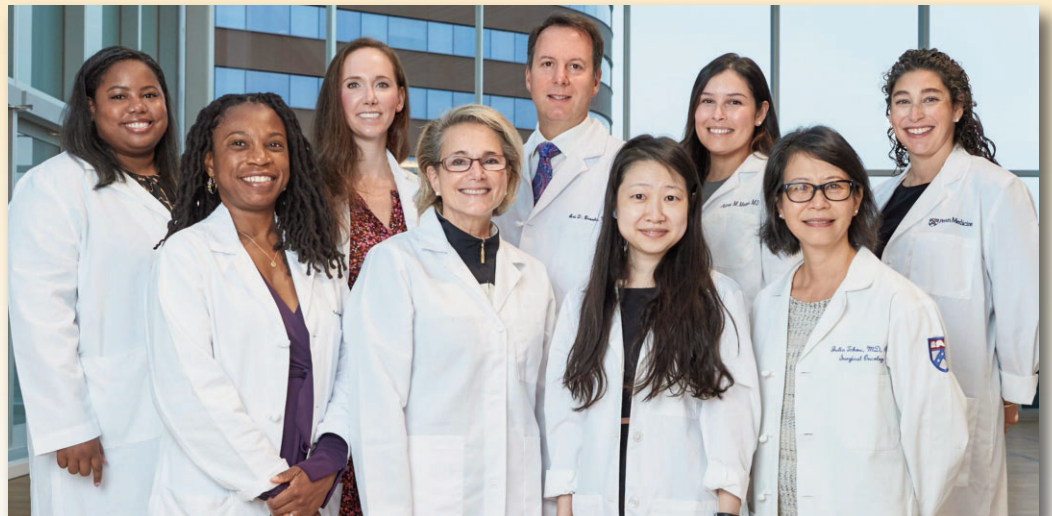
or Co-PI on multiple transformative clinical trials, including the PARTNER trials on transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR), as well as other trials in endovascular aortic stent graft technology. His clinical trial research continues with ongoing studies in catheter-based therapies for mitral and tricuspid disease, as well as serving as the National Principal Investigator in the PERSEVERE trial for the hybrid treatment of acute DeBakey type I aortic dissection. In the area of endovascular treatment of aortic arch pathology, Dr. Szeto is the National Principal Investigator on an Early Feasibility Study with the Relay Dual Branch aortic arch endograft. His commitment to research has

resulted in over 280 publications and 50 invited lectures in the last 5 years. He is the current Secretary of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS). He has served as the Deputy Editor of the Annals of Thoracic Surgery. Notably, he received the STS-TSRA Socrates Award for thoracic surgery residency education.

Overall, Dr. Szeto is an outstanding surgeon, leader, clinical trial researcher, and educator.

Breast Surgery Becomes a Division

Dr. DeMatteo announced establishment of the Division of Breast Surgery. This is the 11th division of the Department. It comprises over 20 surgeons and APPs practicing at the 3 downtown Philadelphia hospitals as well as the Main Line, southern New Jersey, Chester County, Lancaster, and Princeton. In the greater Philadelphia area alone, the breast group sees over 3,000 new patients per year. The Division Chief is Dr. Oluwadamilola "Lola" Fayanju.



HUP Breast Surgeons: Leisha Elmore, Jami Rothman, Ari Brooks, Alina Mateo, Rebecca Fishman, Lola Fayanju, Dahlia Sataloff, Jennifer Q. Zhang and Julia Tchou

John Kucharczuk Inaugural Recipient of the Carole and Stuart Potter Professorship

John Kucharczuk, MD is the inaugural recipient of the Carole and Stuart Potter Professorship in BRCA Clinical Care, a new endowed chair housed within Penn’s Basser Center. Dr. Kucharczuk cared for two relatives of the Basser/Potter family, and Dr. Singhal was instrumental in establishing the chair.

Dr. Kucharczuk graduated cum laude from Villanova with a degree in Chemical Engineering. He arrived at Penn in 1988, and luckily has never left. He obtained his MD from Penn and was inducted into Alpha Omega Alpha. Then, he was a resident in General Surgery at Penn, during which he won the William Inouye Award for teaching. In the lab, he worked with Larry Kaiser, the former Penn Surgery Chair, and Steve Albelda, the Vice Chair for Research for Pulmonary Medicine. Dr. Kucharczuk studied gene therapy for mesothelioma, had several high impact papers, and was issued patents around viral gene transfer methods. For his



John Kucharczuk

accomplishments, he received the Jonathan Rhoads Research Award. After residency, he completed a fellowship in Cardiothoracic Surgery at Penn and joined our faculty in 2001.

Dr. Kucharczuk quickly defined himself as a master clinician. He was named Chief of the Division of Thoracic Surgery in 2011, a position that he held for 10 years. During that time, he enlarged the Division by expanding Thoracic Surgery care to 6 clinical sites, introducing robotics, and leading the esophageal cancer program. Last year, he took on a leadership role as the Medical Director of the Thoracic Surgical Unit and Clinical Director of the Thoracic Oncology Service Line. He is ever present at M&M, where it is obvious that he approaches problems in a practical, straightforward manner and has a wide knowledge base of clinical surgery well beyond his field.

Alumni News

Faculty, Residents, Alumni of Penn Surgery email your news to Clyde Barker clyde.barker@pennteam.upenn.edu

◆ **Matthew Goldshore, MD, MPH, PhD**, (chief resident 2023) received the American College of Surgeons (ACS)/Pfizer Resident Surgical Volunteerism Award for his role in the establishment of the Center for Surgical Health. This center serves as an access point to surgical care for patients who would typically rely on the emergency room for treatment. The award was presented October 18 during the ACS Clinical Congress 2022 in San Diego.



◆ **Rachel R. Kelz, MD, MSCE**, William Maul Measey Professor of Surgery, was awarded the Samuel Martin Health Evaluation Sciences Research Award. Established in 1996 to honor the late Dr. Samuel P. Martin, III, Executive Director of the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics and Chair of the Health Care Systems Unit of the Wharton School, this award is granted to a member of the School of Medicine faculty for a body of work with an emphasis on health services research.



in medical education. Her nomination reflects her invaluable contributions to the field of health services research as an investigator and a critical member of the small community of scientists working to simultaneously advance knowledge, care pathways and the underlying methods used to perform observational studies.

The Samuel Martin Award is one of the Penn Medicine Awards of Excellence. Recipients are chosen by a committee of distinguished faculty from the Perelman School of Medicine and exemplify our profession’s highest values and epitomize the preeminence we all strive to achieve.

In addition Rachel Kelz has been appointed Executive Vice Chair in the Department of Surgery. Previously, she was the Vice Chair for Clinical Research. Dr. Kelz will work with departmental leadership to assist with clinical operations and administration. In particular, she will provide support for the budget, development of new programs, recruitment, special projects, and interaction with UPHS leadership.

8 Dr. Kelz is an internationally recognized leader in the organization and delivery of equitable surgical care and innovations

(continued on page 9)

Alumni News *(continued from page 8)*

- ◆ **Olugbenga Okusanya, MD** (HUP chief resident 2016) has been awarded The Inaugural Robert A. Winn Career Development Award. This two-year award is designed to support the career development of early-stage investigator physicians who are underrepresented in medicine or who have a demonstrated commitment to increasing diversity in clinical research. The program prepares participants to become independent clinical trial investigators engaged in advancing health equity through their research and mentoring.



Gbenga is now an Assistant Professor of Surgery at Jefferson.

- ◆ **Sara Ginzburg, MD** general surgery resident (PGY5) and PC3I Innovation Fellow presented a poster on 'Racial Disparities in the Use of Preoperative Breast MRI after Breast Cancer Diagnosis' at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium where she received a Clinical Scholar Award.



New Faculty

- ◆ **Alexander Fairman, MD** was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery. MD - Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania; Surgery Residency, Integrated Vascular Surgery, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.



- ◆ **Victoria Gershuni, MD** was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery. MD - Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine; General Surgery Residency, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; Fellowship, Advanced Gastrointestinal/ Minimally Invasive Surgery, Washington University.



- ◆ **Daniel Hashimoto, MD** was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery. MD - Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania; General Surgery Residency, Massachusetts General Hospital; Fellowship, Flexible Endoscopy/Foregut Surgery, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center,



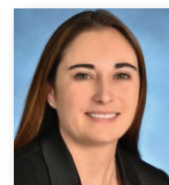
- ◆ **Nathan Klingensmith, MD** was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Traumatology, Surgical Critical Care and Emergency Surgery. MD - West Virginia University Medical School; Surgery Residency - Emory University; Fellowship, Acute Care Surgery, Emory University.



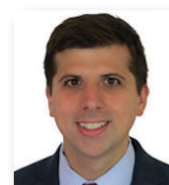
- ◆ **Allison Murray, MD** was appointed Clinical Associate of Surgery in the Division of Breast Surgery. MD - SUNY; General Surgery Residency, SUNY; Fellowship, Breast Oncology, Medstar Georgetown University Hospital.



- ◆ **Jessica F. Rose, DO** was appointed Assistant Professor of Clinical Surgery, in the Division of Plastic Surgery. DO - University of New England, College of Osteopathic Medicine; General Surgery Residency, University of Arizona School of Medicine; Plastic Surgery Residency, Houston Methodist Hospital; Fellowship, Microsurgery, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.



- ◆ **Jarrod D. Predina, MD** was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery, in the Division of Thoracic Surgery. MD - Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania; General Surgery/ Cardiothoracic Surgery Residency, Massachusetts General Hospital; Fellowship Cardiothoracic Surgery, Massachusetts General Hospital.



Departed Faculty

- ◆ **Liza Wu, MD** moved to Boca Raton, Florida to practice Plastic Surgery.



Catching-up with . . . Gbenga Okusanya

Contributed by Jon Morris

Olugbenga T. Okusanya graduated from Harvard College with a Bachelor of Arts (Honors Biology) in 2005 and matriculated that year to the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. During medical school, he served as the President of the Agnew Surgical Society (2008) and received the Russell J. Stumacher Memorial Prize as the graduating student who best combined clinical excellence with an ongoing dedication to and achievement in the creative arts. Following graduation from Penn Med in 2009, Gbenga took his General Surgical training at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania including two years as a Research Fellow in the thoracic research laboratory of Dr. Sunil Singhal. During his surgical training at Penn, Dr. Okusanya received a number of awards and accolades including two Penn Pearls (2012 and 2016), the American College of Surgeons Leadership Scholarship (2013), the William Y. Inouye Resident Award for excellence in teaching medical students (2014), the Gordon P.



Gbenga in 2016

Buzby Surgical Leadership Award (2014), the AATS C. Walton Lillihei Forum Winner (2014), induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society (2015) and the Leonard J. Perloff Chief Resident Award for contributing the most to the education of the junior residents (2016). Following a two year residency in Cardiothoracic Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (2016-2018), Gbenga was recruited onto the faculty at Pittsburgh. In 2020 he was recruited back to Philadelphia as Assistant Professor of Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University. Dr. Okusanya's clinical practice focus is on Thoracic Surgery and he continues to be recognized for his important contributions which include the National Minority Quality Forum 40 under 40 Leader (2022) and the STS Levi Watkins Innovation and Leadership Development Scholarship (2022). Dr. Okusanya is currently the Director of Simulation Education in the Department of Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University.

A Conversation with Gbenga

JoMo: What were the highlights of your training at Penn?

Gbenga: *I find it challenging to keep it to even a few highlights. I especially enjoyed my senior resident rotations. Being the Surg Onc chief and the Morris PGY3 would probably be the clinical highlights of my training. The Cardiothoracic ICU experience was, in retrospect, some of the most important and valuable time I have ever spent in a hospital. From a personal development perspective, my research years with Dr. Singhal and my close work with Dr. Kelz and Dr. Williams back to medical school would be my fondest memories. I have great memories of my time at the VA with Carter, Dr. Kalapatapu, and at Presby with Dr. Pechet.*

JoMo: Which faculty influenced you the most and why?

Gbenga: *Dr. Morris for a lot of reasons. He was easily the attending I connected with the most in our shared joie de vivre. From a technical standpoint, I was always impressed with Dr. Fraker and Dr. Abt. I model how I treat students after a lot of the trauma faculty, including Drs. Gracias, Braslow, Pascual, Sims, and Reilly. Dr. Williams is one of the louder voices in my head when I'm operating without question. The greatness of Dr. Rosato can never be overstated, and the unflinching respect he garnered from the residents always awed me.*

JoMo: When you were a junior resident, which Chief Residents had the greatest impact on you and why?

Gbenga: *Paige Porett. She seemed to have otherworldly powers of anticipation and reaction. Great technician, A+ teacher and mentor. I have the fondest memories of working with Carter Paulson, Rob Roses, Ken Lee, Matt Santore, Rob Redfield and Ray Fitzpatrick. I have come to respect my toughest chiefs as I realized I did learn the most from them, and they forced me to up my game. *Cough cough Myron Allukian**

JoMo: When you were a Chief Resident, which junior residents impressed you the most and why?

Gbenga: *Jashodeep Datta always felt like the most overall impressive junior I worked with during training. Andrew Goldstone was also a superstar from day one. Lea Lowenfeld still has the best hands I've ever seen on any intern (and it's not close). Yun Song was my intern for my chief year and I felt very blessed. Her quiet, thoughtful manner was an excellent balance to mine. She was diligent and incredibly hard-working. Danielle Brown (Spragan), Avery Miller (Rossidis), Phil Dowzicky, Seth Concors and Liza Sonnenberg also stand out.*

JoMo: Tell us what your greatest professional accomplishments have been since graduating Penn.

Gbenga: *I was accepted as part of the inaugural class of the Robert Winn Diversity in Clinical Trials Award. I was also named Reviewer of the Year by the Annals of Thoracic Surgery last year and have since joined*

Catching-up with . . . (continued from page 10)

the editorial board. I was named one of the National Medical Foundations "40 under 40" and received the Society of Thoracic Surgery Levi Watkins Innovation and Leadership Development Scholarship. I've also been named to a few leadership positions within the Society of Thoracic Surgery.

JoMo: What do you miss most about Philadelphia?

Gbenga: Luckily, I'm back in Philadelphia so I don't have much to miss! Happy to have a warm cheesesteak and a nice cold Lager. Though I remain a Colts fan, I'm happy to say GO BIRDS!

JoMo: Who from your Penn Surgery days do you stay in touch with?

Gbenga: Heather Wachtel remains one of my closest friends. Our families are quite close and see each other at least once a month. I'm still in touch with Ned Bartlett, JW MacArthur and Jeff Cohen from my class. Though Ibrahim Sultan and I crossed paths at Penn, we became good friends in Pittsburgh during my fellowship. I frequently text some of my favorite juniors to keep track of them and see how all is going at the big house.

JoMo: Tell us about your current surgical practice, types of cases you are doing, etc.

Gbenga: I'm a total practice robotic thoracic and esophageal surgeon. I've been back at Jefferson across the river for 2 years after being on faculty

for two years at the University of Pittsburgh where I did my fellowship and super fellowship. Most of my practice is lung and esophageal cancer, but I make it a point to keep my practice broad and continue to treat benign foregut disease, pectus, and thoracic outlet syndrome.

JoMo: What are your current interests and hobbies outside of medicine?

Gbenga: My two kids are more than a handful, so they take up any free moment. I still enjoy playing poker, gardening, dancing when we can, DIY projects around the house, and cooking (especially anything involving a smoker).

JoMo: Tell us about your family.

Gbenga: I have two wonderful children, Quinton 8 and Violet 2 who keep me more than occupied and a little grayer of hair than I used to be. Quinton was born in my PGY 6 year. He's a 2nd grader now and is a bright cheerful kid who loves origami, paper planes, tennis, karate and swimming. Violet was born just before we moved back. She's a firecracker and is the spitting image of my mom's personality. My wife, Dr. Marisa Moreta, finished her residency in PM&R in Pittsburgh in 2020 and is now an attending at Jefferson. She's thriving and was recently named Associate Program Director for their residency. My parents still live in the south Jersey area, and my three older brothers are scattered around the country. I'm a fortunate man.



Gbenga with wife Marisa and son Quinton and daughter Violet

JoMo: What is the last book you read that you would recommend and why?

Gbenga: I'd recommend *Atomic Habits* by James Clear and *Empire of Pain* by Patrick Keefe. *Atomic Habits* is just a practical guide to getting a little bit more out of your efforts and *Empire of Pain* is fascinating in terms of real-life drama.

JoMo: Tell us anything else about you that would be of interest to the Penn Surgery Society alumni.

Gbenga: I am incredibly thankful for all my time at Penn. I share with any gifted student that I meet that there is no better training program in the country. It remains a part of my self-identity that I am Penn-trained. I am incredibly proud of that training, those I trained with and under. I hope that I will continue to make you all proud through good works.



Penn Surgery

Department of Surgery
Attn: Clyde Barker, MD
4 Silverstein/HUP
3400 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

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Alumni News *(continued from page 9)*

- ◆ In recognition of **Dr. Jim Mullen's** major role in the design and construction of the Pavilion and its operating rooms his portrait has been hung in the OR area of the Pavilion.



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