



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](mailto:clyde.barker@penmedicine.upenn.edu).

## Message from the Chair

### Presidents

In presenting an overview of Penn Surgery to the General Surgery applicants, I like to highlight that many of our faculty have been presidents of national societies. While I thought that I was aware of who has been a president, the more research I do, the longer the list becomes. The accompanying table is an attempt to summarize faculty (current or those retired within 5 years) who have been, or are about to be, a president. A few have

led more than one society, but this is shown only for Drs. Barker, Schwab, and Wein.

This list will continue to grow over the next 5 years as several faculty presently hold key officer positions. Of course, there are additional critical roles that are not included here, such as serving on the American Board of Surgery. And other faculty have held important regional leadership positions, such as Dahlia Sataloff and Niels Martin, who have each been President as well as Executive Director of the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery.

So what is needed to achieve these positions? Key components are collegiality, collaboration, mentorship, academic productivity, advancing the respective field, networking, and, as always, some luck. Useful advice for junior faculty is to get involved in committees early and then strive to bring forward new ideas. Substantial commitment is necessary to

accommodate the multitude of committee video/telephone/in-person meetings in a clinical schedule. The reward is interacting with new surgeons and researchers, visiting other centers, providing mentorship to faculty and trainees at other institutions, influencing the field, setting policies, and of course spreading the quintessence of Penn Surgery.

<b>Scott Adzick</b>	International Fetal Medicine and Surgery Society (IFMSS)
<b>Clyde Barker</b>	American Surgical Association (ASA) American Philosophical Society (APS) American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) Halsted Society
<b>Joe Bavaria</b>	Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS)
<b>Scott Bartlett</b>	International Society of Craniofacial Surgery (ISCS)
<b>Jeremy Cannon</b>	Excelsior Surgical Society
<b>Ron DeMatteo</b>	Society of Surgical Oncology (SSO)
<b>Ron Fairman</b>	Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS)
<b>Alan Flake</b>	International Fetal Medicine and Surgery Society (IFMSS)
<b>Lewis Kaplan</b>	Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM)
<b>Rachel Kelz</b>	Society of Clinical Surgeons (SCS)
<b>Tom Kolon</b>	Society for Fetal Urology (SFU)
<b>Najjia Mahmoud</b>	American Society of Colorectal Surgeons (ASCRS)
<b>Jim Markmann</b>	International Pancreas and Islet Transplantation Association (IPITA)
<b>Jon Morris</b>	Association of Program Directors in Surgery (APDS)
<b>Mike Nance</b>	Pediatric Trauma Society (PTS)
<b>Kim Olthoff</b>	American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS)
<b>Pat Reilly</b>	American Association for the Surgery of Trauma (AAST)
<b>Bill Schwab</b>	Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST) American Association for the Surgery of Trauma (AAST)
<b>Joe Serletti</b>	American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (ASRM)
<b>Avi Shaked</b>	American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS)
<b>Adam Shiroff</b>	Chest Wall Injury Society
<b>Charles Vollmer</b>	Americas Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association (AHPBA)
<b>Alan Wein</b>	American Association of Genitourinary Surgeons (AAGUS) Society of Urodynamics, Female Pelvic Medicine and Urogenital Reconstruction (SUFU) Society of University Urologists (SUU)
<b>Mark Zaontz</b>	American Association of Pediatric Urologists (AAPU)



**From the Editor**  
**Clyde F. Barker, MD**

When much of the world is on fire and the political scene at home isn't much better, it's not a bad time to celebrate those whose only commitment is to protect us, our soldiers and sailors.

Such an event was the 2023 Navy Ball. This annual commemoration of the U.S. Navy's 1775 founding is held in Washington, DC and numerous other cities. The 2023 Philadelphia Navy Ball was special in recognizing the accomplishments of a partnership between the Navy and Penn's trauma program. This partnership embeds Navy teams with the Penn surgery trauma service. During a period of several months, active duty Navy personnel get more experience in treating penetrating trauma wounds than they would during years at U.S. military hospitals. After completing this training, the Navy teams prove fully capable of managing severely wounded patients at a Level 1 civilian trauma center.

The Navy Ball was attended by members of the Penn trauma service and also by Penn Medicine's Kevin Mahoney and the Navy's retired Admiral Gillingham, who both spoke. During a traditional presentation of the colors, it was unexpectedly noted that one of the team presenting the colors was a young man named Pryor, an ROTC student from Temple. He was unaware that colleagues of his deceased father's Penn trauma division would be present. To them his mannerisms, stature and modest demeanor made him seem almost a clone of his father. This chance reunion became emotional, prompting hugs, tears and more speeches about the senior John Pryor who



(l to r) John Paul Pryor, Jr., Jose Pascual, Niels Martin and Pat Kim

was killed while serving as a combat surgeon in Iraq.

The response to John Pryor's death in 2008 was overwhelming. Nearly a thousand mourners attended his funeral. The University president and top military brass delivered eulogies. Philadelphia Magazine chose him 2009's top Philadelphian. A building at New Jersey's Fort Dix was named for him, as well as the shock trauma unit at Penn's trauma facility at Presbyterian Hospital. For me, a more powerful reminder of John than these fine tributes is the biography written by his younger brother, David, an emergency room physician. Using an unusual literary tactic to bring John to life, he pieces the book together, merging John's diary and essays with conversations between the brothers, some remembered and some imagined. They talked about the meaning of life, John's place in it, sex, cars,



Kevin Mahoney



John Paul Pryor, Jr. hugging Marge and Bill Schwab

medicine, war, George Bush, Saddam Hussein, Donald Trump, and John's premonition that he would die in Iraq. David then presents it as if it was all written by John after he was dead.

This collaboration of the brothers is so seamless that it is hard to tell which one is the author, but at least one of them is a gifted writer.

In the 15 years since John Pryor's death, the tributes, the book and half a dozen wars have gone by to obscure his message, so many readers of the newsletter have probably never heard the story. It is well worth retelling. The book's preface

gives away the plot. In a dream, a hooded figure emerges out of the mist and approaches John. It's Death, come to collect him. Sez John, "Fucking dead? You must be kidding." Sez Death, "I never kid, and how did you get to Mosul?" John responds, "It's too long a story." Death replies, "I've got time," and hands him a pen. The next 476 pages take John from childhood in a small town in upstate New York to a battlefield in Mosul, Iraq on Christmas Day, 2008.

(continued on page 3)



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

Growing up, John was a Boy Scout and high school football star. A part-time experience as an EMT fascinated him with trauma and he imagined himself as a doctor. For John, college was a ball. By cutting classes, he filled his life with fraternity parties, college politics, lasting friendships, practical jokes, the pain of a broken romance and playing the guitar. Everything but studying. I found myself wishing someone could write a chapter like this about me. But the cost of this much fun was a failure in calculus and other low grades that haunted him in a series of medical school rejections that lasted three years. He marked time as a paramedic, by exploring Manhattan's pubs at night and his days as a research assistant in a basic science lab at Columbia. Not willing to give up his desire to be a doctor, he eventually decided to settle for a foreign medical school. There, at St. George's University in Grenada, John Pryor reinvented himself. He fell in love with studying medicine and also fell in love with another student, his future wife.

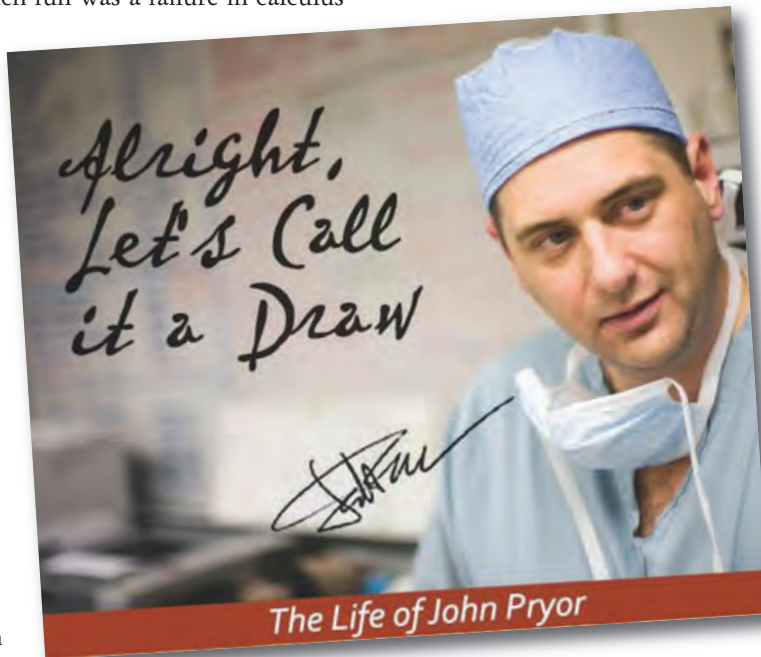
By winning straight-A grades, he succeeded in transferring to an American medical school at SUNY Buffalo. There, he became an AOA and then an outstanding surgical resident. After a trauma fellowship at HUP, he accepted an invitation to join the faculty. He worked hard, won teaching awards, lectured widely and published 100 papers. He was recognized as a natural leader and within a few years, was promoted to associate professor and director of Penn's trauma program. His trajectory was so strikingly upward that his prospect for an outstanding academic career was obvious. He confided to his brother that his goal was now to be a division chief or department chair. The ambition was quite realistic.

On September 11, 2001, John's priorities suddenly changed. After viewing on TV the collapse of the Twin Towers, he felt compelled to drop everything and offer his services. In a remarkable account of his experience driving to New York the same day, he describes his struggle to overcome police barriers to reach Ground Zero. As a trauma surgeon, he was welcomed by the first responders to remain and provide them with expert help. Finding himself one of only a few trauma surgeons there, he set up a command center and planned a field hospital. But no patients showed up.

Manhattan was strangely silent. Even the sound of footsteps was muffled by a thick layer of powder. It became surprisingly eerie that there was nothing for him to do. There was no need for a trauma surgeon. Victims of this terrorist attack were not wounded, but dead. His first-hand narrative of this otherworldly scene is unique and alone is worth the price of the book.

The experience on 9/11 was the inspiration for John to volunteer for the Army, anticipating that in Iraq he would be useful as a combat surgeon. Not surprisingly, his wife, family and friends

were bitterly opposed and they begged him not to go. He attributed his disregard of their protests to a conviction the good life he had experienced as an American somehow obligated him to give back something. In an attempt to explain his decision, he wrote in his diary, "I am a trauma surgeon. It's who I am.... Risky or not, the place for a trained trauma surgeon during war is in combat." Emotionally painful to read are graphic accounts of John's first, exhausting



three-month tour as a combat surgeon in Iraq. He wrote about wounded soldiers he saved or lost with detailed descriptions of their injuries, recoveries or deaths. On Christmas morning in 2008, he was in his second tour as a combat surgeon when he was killed by an enemy rocket.

Despite its ending, the book is neither morbid nor sad. Rather, it is written as the exciting adventure that was John's life. It's full of allegories and episodes of fantasy disguised as John's dreams, all ending with the fatal rocket. The ultimate and most profound allegory titles the book— Alright, Let's Call It a Draw. It attempts to explain the motivation for John's sacrifice. It is an expression of his surprise and incredulous response to death's pronouncement along with the lack of any apology for the decision to leave his family and abandon a promising academic career. Instead, he seems to be fulfilled in his acceptance of the fatal tradeoff. Maybe the allegory and John's life can be understood best by conjuring up a Monty Python movie sketch that was one of John's favorites. In it, the Black Knight (played by John Cleese) refuses to give up the battle, even after losing his arms and legs. Instead he calls for a draw. Whatever the reason, we need to be grateful for men like John Pryor and remember them with events like the Navy Ball.

# Michael Acker to step down as Chief, Division of Cardiovascular Surgery

Dr. Michael Acker has decided to step down as Chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery by July 2024. Dr. Acker has dedicated over two decades of his career to serving in this pivotal role, and his remarkable leadership has left an indelible mark on our institution. He will continue his clinical responsibilities in the Division and support the transition to a new Chief.

Dr. Acker's journey began at Brown University, where he obtained B.S. and M.D. degrees. He trained in General Surgery at Penn, earning the prestigious Jonathan E. Rhoads Research Award. He completed his Cardiothoracic Fellowship at Johns Hopkins and then remained there on the faculty as an Assistant Professor of Surgery. In 1993, Dr. Acker joined the Penn Medicine faculty, embarking on an impactful tenure that has resulted in numerous academic, clinical, and research milestones. Dr. Acker succeeded Tim Gardner to become the Chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery in 2003.

He has been recognized for his outstanding contributions throughout his distinguished career. He has held esteemed professorships, including the William Maul Measey Professorship of Surgery (2004-2017) and the Julian Johnson Professorship of Cardiothoracic Surgery (2017-). Notably, he has received numerous prestigious awards, such as the Louis Duhring Outstanding Clinical Specialist (2002), Alfred Stengel Health System Champion Award (2013), and the Gordon Buzby Surgical Leadership Award (2018).

His influence has extended beyond his role as Chief. He served as the Director of the Heart and Vascular Service Line (2009-2023) and as Vice Chair of the Department (2009-2017). He set division and service line direction that helped achieve quality targets, such as 3-star CABG and 3-star AVR programs, and spearheaded changes to align cardiac surgery practice with the use of pathways across the various hospitals.

As a dedicated researcher, Dr. Acker has made significant contributions to the field, authoring over 300 publications, including notable first and senior author publications in *Science* and *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Under his leadership as the principal investigator, Penn became one of the founding academic institutions of the NHLBI-sponsored Cardiothoracic Surgery Network, driving progress in multicenter clinical trials in cardiac **4** surgery and cardiovascular disease. Dr. Acker's commitment



to advancing knowledge has been further demonstrated by his continuous NIH funding since 2009.

Beyond his academic accomplishments, Dr. Acker's expertise as a cardiac surgeon has positively impacted the lives of countless patients. His specialization in end-stage heart failure, coronary artery disease, and complex valve disease has led to advancements in surgical techniques and patient care. Notably, he performed the first intracorporeal left ventricular assist device at Penn in 1994 and served as the Surgical Director of the Penn Cardiac

Transplant and Mechanical Assist Program (1994-2014).

Dr. Acker's commitment to education and mentorship is equally noteworthy. He served as the Program Director of the Thoracic Residency Program (2003-2018), spearheading an integrated residency model that has become a benchmark in the field. The integrated cardiothoracic training program, pioneered by Dr. Acker at Penn and at Stanford, has solidified Penn's thoracic residency as one of the best in the nation.

Under Dr. Acker's visionary leadership, our academic cardiac surgery program has excelled. He leads a world-class faculty of academic cardiac surgeons who have propelled nationally renowned programs in advanced aortic disease, heart and lung transplantation, mechanical circulatory assist, complex valve disease, and coronary disease. Their groundbreaking research and expertise have garnered significant NIH and industry funding and positioned Penn as the leading cardiac surgery program in our region, with over 3,000 major cardiac surgery cases performed annually. Impactful translational and clinical research, a renowned cardiovascular residency program, and world class faculty have combined to make Penn one of the top cardiovascular divisions in the nation.

Upon stepping down as Chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery, Dr. Acker will maintain his clinical involvement and provide guidance at the divisional and department level. We extend our sincere congratulations and appreciation to Dr. Acker for his leadership, dedication, and the immeasurable impact he has made during his tenure.

Please join us in celebrating Dr. Acker's remarkable achievements and expressing gratitude for his many contributions to Penn Medicine, the Department of Surgery, and the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery.

Ronald DeMatteo

# James Markmann Appointed Vice President of Transplant Services

We are delighted to announce that James F. Markmann, MD, PhD, will be the new Vice President of Transplant Services for the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and the Vice Chair of Transplant in the Department of Surgery. Dr. Markmann is a Philadelphia native who attended LaSalle University and then received his MD and PhD in Immunology from the Perelman School of Medicine. He was a resident in General Surgery at Penn and then completed a 2-year fellowship in Transplant Surgery at UCLA. Thereafter, he was a member of the Penn faculty until 2007 when he was recruited to the Massachusetts General Hospital to be the Chief of the Division of Transplant Surgery and the Claude E. Welch Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School.

In his time at MGH/Harvard, Dr. Markmann focused his clinical and administrative efforts on program quality and growth, in addition to advancing process improvement and education. He and his team initiated multidisciplinary clinics and enhanced outreach programs, achieving marked expansion of transplant referrals and procedures with excellent clinical outcomes. Through these efforts, MGH became the dominant transplant center in one of the most highly competitive health care regions in the U.S.

In addition to leading an active clinical transplant division, Dr. Markmann served as Chair of the Clinical Operations Committee for the Transplant Center at MGH and co-directed the MGH Center for Transplantation Sciences. He has held numerous national roles in UNOS, SRTR, JDRE, Immune Tolerance Network, and NIH Study Sections and leadership as President of the International Pancreas and Islet Transplantation Association and Treasurer of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (for which he is slated to become President in 2025). He has served on numerous editorial boards and was an Associate Editor for the American Journal of Transplantation.



Dr. Markmann is also a world-recognized investigator who has strived to be at the forefront of innovation in Transplantation. Expanding the supply of transplantable organs and eliminating dependence on chronic immunosuppression have been primary areas of focus. Dr. Markmann and his team have led a liver normothermic perfusion effort, performed the first successful transplant of stem cell-derived islets to a type 1 diabetic patient, helped build one of the most active xeno-

transplantation efforts in the U.S. through collaboration with a Cambridge, Massachusetts startup, and has been working on clinically relevant cell-based therapeutics with collaborators at Penn. Collaboration with industry has been integral to the team's progress in these areas.

Dr. Markmann is the Primary Investigator on National Institute of Health and private grants totaling \$8.6 million. His publication record includes more than 340 peer-reviewed publications and more than 90 textbook chapters, reviews, and editorials. He has regularly presented his work nationally and internationally. He is a member of the American Surgical Association and the Society of Clinical Surgery and has been recognized annually as one of the Boston area's "top doctors" by Boston Magazine.

We extend our thanks to the search committee, spearheaded by the Chief of Vascular Surgery Darren Schneider, which interviewed many exceptionally qualified applicants.

We thank Dr. Abraham Shaked for his outstanding leadership of the Penn Transplant Institute for the last 18 years. During his tenure, the Institute's track record of leading patient care and research firsts positioned the PTI as a national leader and model for our peers. We will have a more formal opportunity to celebrate Dr. Shaked during a symposium to be held in the spring.



# Giorgos Karakousis Appointed Chief of Endocrine and Oncologic Surgery

Dr. Karakousis graduated Magna Cum Laude with BS and MS degrees in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics from Yale University and then obtained his medical degree from Penn. He stayed at Penn for General Surgery residency, during which time he received the William T. Inouye Resident Teaching Award. He then completed a Fellowship in Surgical Oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. In 2010, he returned to Penn to join the faculty. He was promoted to Professor last year.

Without a doubt, he is an expert surgeon and clinician. He has built an enormous clinical practice in melanoma and sarcoma. Last year, he was inducted into the Penn Academy of Master Clinicians. He is a perennial *Philadelphia Magazine* Top Doctor. He is recognized nationally and internationally for his work in melanoma and has lectured widely.

Dr. Karakousis has had multiple leadership roles. He has been the Chair of the Cancer Committee in the Abramson Cancer Center since 2014 and Melanoma Disease Site Co-Leader since 2015. Nationally, within the ECOG-ACRIN cooperative group, he is a member of both the Melanoma and Surgery Committees. He sits on the National Comprehensive Cancer Network Melanoma Guidelines Panel. Within the Society of Surgical Oncology, he was the Chair of the Melanoma Disease Site Working Group and member of the Sarcoma Disease Site Working Group, SSO Education Council, and Scientific Program Committee. He is the Section Editor of Melanoma and Sarcoma of *Surgical Oncology* and is also on the editorial boards of the *Annals of Surgical Oncology* and *Journal of Surgical Oncology*. He is a member of the Society of University Surgeons and the Halsted Society.

Deservedly, Dr. Karakousis has received several awards. The Melanoma International Foundation declared him Doctor of the Year in 2016. He received the Humanitarian Award from the Melanoma Research Foundation. He was a James IV Association of Surgeons Travelling Fellow in 2020. Locally, he has won several teaching awards, including the Jon B. Morris Faculty Teaching Award, Penn Pearl teaching award, Penn Department of Surgery



**Giorgos Karakousis**

Mentorship Award, and undergraduate (UME) and graduate (GME) teaching award of distinctions.

His research is primarily focused on melanoma, and he is currently a Project Co-PI of the Penn/Wistar Melanoma SPORE. He is the principal investigator for an important Phase II neoadjuvant anti-PD-1 trial for patients with high-risk localized melanoma. He has served as PI or co-PI of a multitude of other clinical trials. He has published over 270 papers and many reviews, editorials, and book chapters. He has mentored numerous residents and medical students in research.

Everyone is grateful for the 28 years of outstanding leadership by Dr. Douglas Fraker, who has built one of the premier surgical oncology divisions in the country. Dr. Fraker will continue in his busy clinical practice.

We are grateful to Dr. Wilson Szeto and the rest of the committee for their diligence in conducting the search.

Overall, Dr. Karakousis is a highly accomplished surgeon, researcher, and educator who has demonstrated the highest level of professionalism. Please congratulate him on this leadership position.

Ronald DeMatteo



**Doug Fraker**

## Rosato Surgical Lounge Opening Reception

The official opening of the Ernest F. Rosato Surgical Resident Lounge, due in large part by the support of William and Susan Rosato and the Department of Surgery, occurred on October 13, 2023 on Maloney 4. While it has been over a decade since Ernie Rosato passed his impact on this Department continues to this day. Consider that Ernie Rosato received the Inouye Faculty Award from the Chief Residents 18 times which included a 13 year consecutive run. The award is given to the faculty member whose leadership, caring attitude and surgical judgment has been a model for the Surgeon-in-Training and with whom a bond of mutual respect and friendship has been established. Twenty two of the Chief Residents that selected Ernie for the Inouye Award were appointed to our faculty and currently 15 of them are still with us to include the likes of Drs. Dempsey, Low, Gorman, DeMatteo, Williams, Kucharczuk, Kim, Szeto, Kelz, Dumon, Atluri, Karakousis, Fosnot, Paulson and Roses.

Yes, Ernie's impact is still with us. Not only by training a generation of superb technical surgeons but making the experience of being a Penn surgical resident so deeply meaningful. And that is precisely why it means so much to honor his name and memory with this new space for our residents.

Jon Morris



Geraldine, wife of the late Ernie Rosato



William and Susan Rosato looking at the William Y. Inouye Faculty Award



Geraldine Rosato with her children Rafael, Anthony, David, William, Catherine, Ernest, Philip



Dr. DeMatteo addressing the audience at the Ernest Rosato Surgical Resident Lounge Opening Reception 7





**Department of Surgery 2023**



# Penn Surgery Reception at the Clinical Congress of the American College of Surgeons

In Boston on October 23rd the traditional Penn reception was hosted by Dr. Ron DeMatteo for students, resident and faculty.



**Lily Maguire, Ron DeMatteo, Heather Wachtel and Alyson Kim**



**Lori Pray, Marie McIntyre, Sean Looby, Taine Pechet, Taranae Mahmoodi, and Meredith Fox**



**Laura Huth, Justin Hatchimonji, Elias Chamely and Seth Concors**



**Maria Altieri, Rachel Kelz, Kate Sharoky and Kim Olthoff**



# Niels Martin Appointed Division Chief

I am delighted to announce that Niels Martin, MD, will be the next Chief of the Division of Traumatology, Surgical Critical Care, and Emergency Surgery. The Division is one of the premier Trauma programs in the country and has generated many academic leaders throughout the field of surgery.

Dr. Martin graduated from Rutgers University and received his medical degree from Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He trained in General Surgery at Jefferson and then was a fellow in Traumatology and Surgical Critical Care at Penn. His first faculty appointment was at Jefferson and then 4 years later, in 2012, he was recruited back to Penn. Dr. Martin was promoted to Associate Professor in 2019. He is board certified in both Surgery and Surgical Critical Care.

He has played multiple roles in his division, the department, and the School of Medicine. Since 2015, he has been the Section Chief of Surgical Critical Care in the division, Co-Medical Director of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit at Penn Presbyterian Hospital, and Program Director of the Trauma & Surgical Critical Care Fellowships. It is important to point out his outstanding contributions to the overall Department of Surgery. He has been instrumental in developing surgical coverage of HUP Cedar. He is a leader of the new Penn Organ Donor Center. He became the Vice Chair for Diversity & Inclusion of the Department of Surgery in 2020. Furthermore, he is a member of the departmental Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP). Within the medical school, he is the Vice Chair of the Student Standards Committee and a Diversity Search Advisor.

Dr. Martin has had innumerable national and local leadership



positions. He is the Chair Elect of the Surgery Section of the Society of Critical Care Medicine. He is the Chair of the Research-Scholarship Committee of the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST). He is an examiner for the American Board of Surgery and Director of the Trauma, Burns, & Surgical Critical Care Board for the American Board of Surgery. He is also on the Board of Directors for the Surgical Critical Care Program Directors Society and on the Governing Board of Gift of Life Donor Program. Locally, he has been the President of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Society of Critical Care Medicine, President of the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery (and is now the Executive Director), and President of the Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapter of the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Martin has won multiple awards for teaching as well as the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award and was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

In addition to his multitude of leadership roles, Dr. Martin is on the General Surgery Editorial Board of the Surgical Council on Resident Education (SCORE). He is an Associate Editor of Trauma Surgery & Acute Care Open (TSACO). He has over 125 publications focused on clinical outcomes in trauma and critical care and has lectured widely. Moreover, he has been the principal investigator of multiple clinical trials.

We are deeply appreciative of Dr. Pat Reilly, who has expertly led the Division for the last 12 years. We are also grateful to Dr. John Kucharczuk and the rest of the committee who conducted the national search.

Ronald DeMatteo

## Transitions in DSE Leadership

It is with mixed emotions and yet tremendous pride that we share with you the news that Laura Huth has been appointed as the next Executive Director for Surgical Specialties at the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). Laura's last day in DSE will be January 12, 2024.

Laura arrived at Penn in 2010 as the Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Surgery at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, but shortly thereafter it became quite obvious that her passion was for surgical education. To say that Laura Huth has been an icon whose name is immediately synonymous with DSE would be a severe understatement. There is not a single position in the surgical education office that she has not taken on and done so with extraordinary skill, to wit: Undergraduate Medical

Education Coordinator (2011-2013), Graduate Medical Education Coordinator for General Surgery (2013-2017) and overseeing the entire DSE enterprise as Manager (2017-2019), Associate Director (2019-2021) and finally as the Director (2021-present). Her exceptional accomplishments have been recognized in the Department (Council of Chiefs Service Excellence Award in 2016), Penn Medicine (Graduate Medical Education Citizenship Award in 2022) and nationally as the President for the Association of Residency Administrators in Surgery, effective 2024.



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## DSE Leadership *(continued from page 11)*

Laura has excelled at the administrative side of surgical education and has been a champion for all of her constituents: our trainees, program directors, associate program directors and of course the DSE staff. She navigates the fine line between the interests of the Department while fiercely advocating for our residents and fellows. Laura is as comfortable negotiating the annual GME Departmental budget with JMEC 6 Leadership as she is socializing with surgical residents and faculty at an off campus venue. Her people skills, namely the engaging, personal, unpretentious and welcoming way she approaches everyone she comes into contact with at Penn remains one of her most endearing and defining traits. From recruitment to graduation, Laura's number one prior-

ity was to create a supportive and nurturing learning environment for all of our trainees. Whenever she uttered the words "my residents" what she really was saying was these folks are akin to family and she insisted they be treated as such. Over the years, literally hundreds of residents and fellows have sought her personal advice, mentorship and friendship on topics that often extended way beyond the scope of surgical training.

Please join us in congratulating Laura on this next step for her professional career. It is hard to imagine anyone more deserving or qualified for this ACGME appointment than Laura Huth. It goes without saying that Laura will be sorely missed but this is another example of how Penn Surgery continues to lay the foundation for the next generation of leaders in American Surgery.

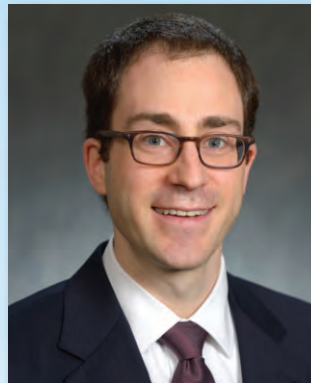
Jon Morris

# Scott Damrauer Appointed Vice Chair of Clinical Research

We are excited to announce that Scott Damrauer, MD, will be the next Vice Chair of Clinical Research in the Department of Surgery. After Dr. Damrauer completed college and medical school at Harvard he was a resident in General Surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital. He spent 3 years in the lab of Christiane Ferran at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center studying vascular disease biology using preclinical models and was funded by the Harvard Longwood Vascular Surgery T32 Training Grant. He came to Penn in 2012 as a Vascular Fellow and joined the faculty in 2014, operating at both HUP and the VA. Earlier this year, he was promoted to Associate Professor on the Tenure track and received the William Maul Measey II endowed chair.

He is remarkably intertwined with numerous research groups across the Penn campus. He holds a secondary appointment in the Department of Genetics and is a faculty member of the Penn Cardiovascular Institute and the Graduate Group in Genomics and Computational Biology. He is Senior Fellow of the Leonard Davis Institute for Healthcare Policy, Associate Scholar in the Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Senior Fellow of the Institute for Biomedical Informatics, and Research Associate in the Population Aging Research Center (PARC). He serves as one of the Associate Directors of the Penn Medicine Biobank where he helps facilitate internal and external scientific collaborations. In addition, he is on the Institutional Review Board at the VA.

**12** Dr. Damrauer uses human genetics and deep phenotyping to



understand and treat vascular disease, including peripheral artery disease, aortic aneurysms, and carotid stenosis. He has over 160 publications from his time here at Penn. He has won the 2019 Young Physician-Scientist Award, the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the 2020 Jacobson Promising Investigator Award from the American College of Surgeons. In 2019 his work was recognized by the American Heart Association Award as one of the Top Advances in Heart Disease and Stroke Research.

Dr. Damrauer is well funded, with an R01 to study the role of lipid lowering therapy with PCSK9 inhibitors to treat abdominal aortic aneurysms and a VA Merit Award to study the genetics of carotid stenosis. He has been a principal investigator on investigator-initiated and industry-sponsored studies. He has served on multiple American Heart Association, NIH, and VA study sections. Recently, he was appointed to the editorial board of *Circulation*. He has mentored over 25 medical students, residents, fellows, and junior faculty.

We are extremely grateful to Dr. Rachel Kelz, who did an outstanding job in this position over the last 4 years. During her tenure, along with Dr. Singhal, Dr. Kelz built the Clinical Research Unit to provide infrastructure to support clinical trials, launched a pilot grant program to encourage emerging investigators, developed the research curriculum for residents and Measey Scholars, formalized the Measey Scholar program activities, and mentored numerous faculty and trainees in their clinical research pursuits.

Ronald DeMatteo



# Alumni News


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

- ◆ **Eduardo Rodriguez Zoppi, MD** (HUP Chief Resident 2014) has been appointed the Chief of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery at Memorial Healthcare System, Hollywood, Florida. 
- ◆ **Thomas E. Hamilton, MD** (HUP Chief Resident 1998) has been appointed an Associate Professor of Surgery and the Inaugural Esophageal and Airway Treatment Endowed Chair in Pediatric General Surgery at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in the Division of Pediatric General, Thoracic and Fetal Surgery. 
- ◆ **Dale Butler, MD MBA FACS** (HUP Trauma Surgery and Critical Care Fellow 2022) was recently appointed the Emergency General Surgery Medical Director at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas. 
- ◆ **Jashodeep Datta, MD** (HUP Chief Resident 2017) was awarded the DiMare Family Endowed Chair in Immunotherapy at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, making him the youngest recipient of an Endowed Chair in the Miller SOM. 
- ◆ **Omar Jarral, MD** (2022 Aortic Fellow) was appointed Attending Cardiac Surgeon at Lenox Hill Hospital and the Northwell Cardiovascular Institute, New York. He completed his cardiac surgery fellowships at Duke and Penn, and his cardiothoracic surgery residency in London at Bart's, St. Thomas and the Royal Brompton. 
- ◆ **Leisha Elmore, MD, MPHS** has been appointed Chief of Breast Surgery at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center. 

## New Penn Surgery Faculty

- ◆ **Elizabeth Sonnenberg, MD, MSHP** was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Transplant Surgery. MD - Perelman School of Medicine; MSHP - Perelman School of Medicine; General Surgery Residency - Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; Abdominal Transplant Surgery Fellowship - University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, Michigan. 
- ◆ **Ronald Parsons, MD** was appointed Associate Professor of Surgery, Division of Transplant Surgery and Surgical Director, Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Programs. MD - University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Buffalo, New York; General Surgery Residency - University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; Abdominal Organ Transplant and Hepatobiliary Surgery Fellowship - Columbia University. 
- ◆ **Paul Hernandez, MD** was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center. MD - Perelman School of Medicine; General Surgery, Residency, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; Colon and Rectal Surgery Fellowship, Weill Cornell Medicine/ New York Presbyterian Hospital. 
- ◆ **Leslie M. Okorji, MD** was appointed Assistant Professor, Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery at Pennsylvania Hospital. MD - Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, Illinois; General Surgery Residency, Carolinas Medical Center, Charlotte, North Carolina; Advanced GI/MIS Surgery Fellow, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama. 

## Departed Faculty

- ◆ **Ty Dunn, MD** was appointed Surgical Director, Kidney & Pancreas Transplantation and Director of Clinical Operations, Solid Organ Transplant, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. 



# Catching-up with . . . Anu Saigal

Contributed by Jon Morris

Anupama (Sharma) Saigal attended the University of Maryland (College Park) graduating in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science in Neurophysiology during which time she received a Masters in Public Health, (Healthcare management) from the George Washington University School of Public Health (2000 - 2001). In addition, Anu was a research fellow at the National Institutes of Health (1997 - 1999) where she investigated the tumorigenesis of Burkitt's Lymphoma. Anu stayed in Maryland graduating from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 2005. She took her General Surgical training at Penn (2005 - 2012) spend-



Anu in 2012

ing two years in the Harrison Department of Surgical Research from 2008 to 2010 where she analyzed clinical data in the setting of a Phase 2 clinical trial for a dendritic cell based cancer vaccine against HER-2/neu in women with DCIS. Clinical fellowship followed in Breast Surgery at Columbia University (2012 - 2013) and appointments as Assistant Professor of Surgery at NYU Langone Medical Center (2013 - 2015) and subsequently Long Island Jewish Medical Center (2015 - 2016). Anu subsequently moved to Orlando, Florida where she is currently the Director of Breast Surgery at Winters Park Campus at Advent Health.

## A Conversation with Anu

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

**Anu:** *My time at the University of Pennsylvania was an exciting and pivotal period of my life. I cannot emphasize the impact of the rigorous training and the vast surgical experience that has shaped my career. The volume and complexity of cases as well as the phenomenal attendings made the years fly by... but above all the friendship and camaraderie of my co-residents – Matt Santore, Rob Lewis, Peter Jenkins, Dustin Bermudez, Clay Brinster, Chad Wu made the years so memorable.*

**JoMo:** Which faculty influenced you the most and why?

**Anu:** *Dr. Brian Czerniecki significantly influenced my decision to pursue a career in breast cancer while I worked in his lab during my research years. His immunology research in breast as well as his efficient clinical and surgical style shaped my interest in becoming a physician scientist and to go into breast surgical oncology. He continues to be a great mentor and I often call on him not only for advice on complex cases but also for career advice.*

*Dr. Doug Fraker also influenced my practice significantly. Dr. Fraker was not only technically an excellent surgeon but also extremely efficient in managing his clinic and OR schedule. Thanks to Dr. Fraker I can now run 2 -3 rooms with anywhere from 10-15 cases and still be able to pick up my boys from school!*

*Dr. Ben Braslow and Dr. Jon Morris also were impactful due to their commitment to not only their patients but also colleagues and residents and made us all feel like a family in the department.*

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

**Anu:** *Dr. Rob Roses, Dr. Paige Porret and Dr. Dave Stitelman were the most humble and dedicated residents I had the pleasure of working with, and they were also excellent surgeons that I really hoped to emulate during my days as a junior resident. Paige, Rob and Dave never missed an opportunity to teach, and I watched them take care of patients the way that I would want my family to be taken care of.*

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

**Anu:** *Dr. Ken Lee's diligence and dedication were very impressive. Ken was the hardest worker but he also happened to be one of the kindest and smartest residents I had the privilege of working with.*

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

**Anu:** *After graduating I completed my fellowship at Columbia for breast cancer surgery and then worked at NYU for a few years as an associate professor. After moving to Orlando, I have established myself with a busy practice in central Florida, and am honored to help elevate the standard of breast care here by being one of very few fellowship trained breast surgeons in the area. I was honored to be identified as one of the WOMEN OF THE YEAR for Orlando Magazine in 2021, after being nominated by patients and colleagues.*

**JoMo:** What do you miss most about Philadelphia?

**Anu:** *I miss my U of Penn Department of Surgery family - the attendings, the residents, the operating room staff. And I miss running along the Schuylkill river and getting coffee in Rittenhouse square in the wintertime.*

## Catching-up with . . . (continued from page 14)

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

**Anu:** *We are spread all over the country but I still stay in close touch with Dave Stitelman, Demetri Merianos, Matt Santore and Rob Lewis and try to meet them often. Fortunately there are many national conferences in Orlando its a great excuse for us to see each other!*

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

**Anu:** *I am currently the director of the breast surgery at AdventHealth Winter Park, Florida, and I performed over 500 cases last year. My practice is completely focused on breast cancer - lumpectomies, partial mastectomies, mastectomies and axillary nodal evaluations.*

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

**Anu:** *I enjoy reading and cooking for my family every day... Now that the boys are older we are traveling more frequently and just returned from a trip to Istanbul which was amazing. We also went to see beautiful Lake Como, Italy last year and take lots of trips to visit the Florida beaches.*

**JoMo:** Tell us about your family.

**Anu:** *My husband, Kapil Saigal has a facial plastic surgery practice here in Winter Park, and we have three good boys - Kabir 10, Arjun 9, Shiv 7 - who keep us very busy! I am orig-*



**Anu with her sons Shiv, Arjun, Kabir and husband Kapil.**

*inally from Maryland and my parents and extended family are still there, though my sister recently moved down to Orlando as well.*

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

**Anu:** *The last book I read was ALL THE LIGHT YOU CANNOT SEE - pulitzer prize*

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

**Anu:** *At the onset of my career I had imagined myself as a physician scientist at an academic center similar to U of Penn - but life had other plans for me. However, because of my training at Penn, I have been able to establish a successful practice that is making an impact in not only the community but also in shaping the standard of healthcare in an area that does not have a major academic center. My advice to the current residents would be to not only appreciate the breadth of cases and clinical experiences while at this incredible hospital, but to not forget the value of exposure to remarkable surgeons and mentors while training at HUP.*







# Penn Surgery

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## Previous Alumni Newsletters

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**FALL 2023**



The Center for Surgical Health (CSH) was invited to present “*The Center for Surgical Health: A Surgical Support Model for Philadelphia*” at Independence Blue Cross Foundation’s annual Blue Safety Net meeting. The innovation of CSH was received enthusiastically as a much needed social intervention to address surgical health equity.

The model was presented by **Drs. Matt Goldshore** and **Carrie Morales** (pictured) with attendance from CSH team, Dr. Jon Morris, Lauren Rossi, Tara Conlon and Courtney Chappelle. CSH was recently awarded funding to support programmatic growth through 2024 by IBC Health Equity Foundation.

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