



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.

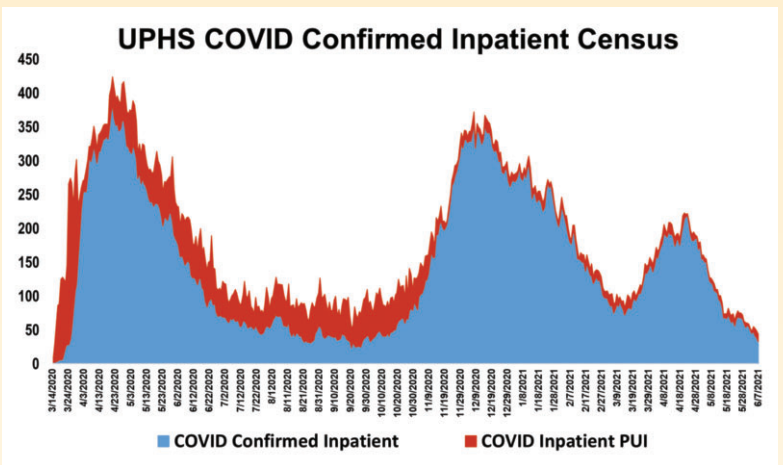


Ron DeMatteo, MD
John Rhea Barton
Professor and Chair,
Department of Surgery

Message from the Chair

The Pandemic continues to recede, at least in the West. The census of infected inpatients in the health system is down to about 30 from a peak of 350 (see graph), although a smattering of new patients persists. The original Penn Resurgence to restore normalcy launched last summer. Resurgence #2 was necessary in early 2021 and then a small wave of infection occurred in April.

The effects of the Pandemic on our lexicon are notable. Some of the words and phrases, many of them new, are shown in the figure. Hopefully, many will soon fall into disuse. Not shown is the



number of words that younger generations have substituted for "Pandemic." These include the Panoramic, Pandora, Panasonic, and even Panini. The logic of this escapes me. By any name, though, it has caused worldwide devastation and loss of life.

It is difficult to keep up with the announcements that are relaxing the restrictions, both in and out of the hospital. The CPUP Surgical and Procedural Oversight Committee that regulated OR policy during the Pandemic was disbanded a few weeks ago. We have stopped preoperative COVID testing for outpatient procedures. Penn has instituted a mandatory vaccination policy for employees, albeit with some exceptions. Masks are coming off in the city and many recent graduations have been in person. Perhaps the greatest indicator of normal activity is that the Schuylkill is clogged once again and vacant HUP beds are sparse; complaints about these should be withheld hereafter.



IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Chair	1
From the Editor	2-3
John Daly	4-5
Lola Fayanju	5
Alumni News	6-7
Wall of Fame	8-9
Catching-up	10-12



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

This article about our former chief of plastic surgery appeared recently in the *Annals of Plastic Surgery*.

Linton A. Whitaker Legacy Cultivating Craniofacial Surgeon Leaders, by S.C. Azoury, C.L. Kalmar, C. E. Zimmerman, J. W. Swanson, J. M. Serletti, S. P. Bartlett and J. A. Taylor.

While browsing through additional issues of the same Journal, another paper caught my eye: *Can Covey's Seven Habits Produce a Highly Effective Plastic Surgeon?* It was an editorial by the journal's editor, Andrew Diver. Its title got my attention because during junior high school in Salt Lake City, Steve Covey was my classmate and best friend.

After junior high, I left Salt Lake for school in the East. Steve and I soon lost touch. After business school at Harvard, Steve got his PhD at BYU and remained there as a professor. We never reconnected. Years after we were schoolmates, Steve wrote a successful book: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. It sold 25 million copies, remained on the New York Times bestseller list for 220 weeks and was translated into 38 languages. It was considered the most influential self-help book of the 20th century.

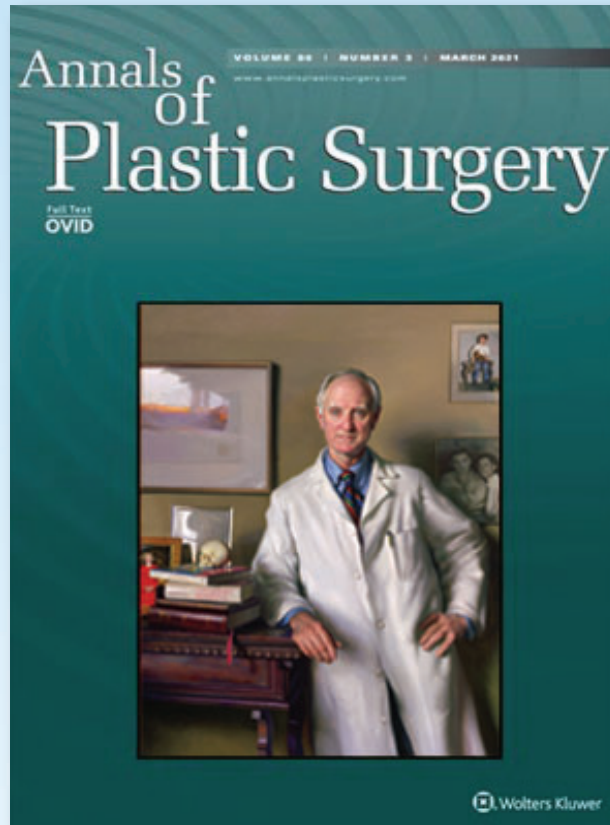
I've never paid much attention to self-help books. I didn't even know that my old friend wrote a famous one about seven habits until about 10 years ago when in a bookstore I was surprised to recognize Steve's picture on the book's cover. I still haven't read the book but I did look to see what the seven habits were: (1) be proactive; (2) begin with an end in mind; (3) put first things first; (4) think win-win; (5) seek first to understand, then to be understood; (6) synergize; and (7) sharpen the saw (continue to improve).

Covey's habits make pretty good sense. In his editorial, Irish surgeon Andrew Diver asserts that they can produce an effective plastic surgeon. In fact, he believes they may have helped

him to become one. I don't know if Linton Whitaker has ever been aware of Covey's habits. But whatever his own formula for success, it has made him one of the most highly effective and honored surgeons anywhere.

After college at the University of Texas, Austin, medical school at Tulane and surgical residency at Dartmouth, Dr. Whitaker came to the University of Pennsylvania for plastic surgery training in 1969. Only one year after completion of this training, he founded the craniofacial program at Penn. He was

one of only a small number of surgeons responsible for developing this new field. He played an especially large role in introducing and demonstrating the safety of craniofacial surgery for young children. As chief of plastic surgery at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (1981-2001) and chief of plastic surgery at the University of Pennsylvania and HUP (1987-2004), he trained many residents and fellows in innovative techniques that are now considered standard. He also founded the Center for Human Appearance at Penn, dedicated to the scientific study and treatment of appearance. His trainees are now distributed around the world, mentoring the next generations of plastic and craniofacial surgeons.



Dr. Whitaker holds 11 honorary memberships in medical societies, including 8 internationally. In 2009, he received the International Society for Craniofacial Surgery's highest honor, the Paul Tessier Medal, named for Linton's mentor and the founder of the field. In the organization's 22-year history, this award has been bestowed only twice. He received the lifetime achievement award from the American Society of Maxillofacial Surgery. In 2016, he was named an Icon in Plastic Surgery, and in 2017, he was named Clinician of the Year by the American Association of Plastic Surgeons. He has authored more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and 6 books and given more than 300 invited lectures to scientific organizations worldwide. Three lectureships have been established in his name.

Few surgeons have played a major role in developing a new field while also occupied with managing a leading training program and carrying out an active clinical practice. Linton has balanced these roles well, but his greatest impact will be through

(continued on page 3)

From the Editor *(continued from page 2)*

inspiring in his trainees the same drive for scholarship, leadership and mentorship exhibited by himself. The first phase of this impact has been measured in this study of the accomplishments of his trainees.

I agree with Andrew Diver that Steve Covey's seven habits may help to produce highly effective business executives, office managers or even surgeons. But it takes something extra, not identified in the papers by either Covey or Diver, to produce a Linton Whitaker. I don't know if the something extra is just another habit or something more elusive. Whatever it is can be recognized only by examining the careers and accomplishments of the trainees.

This extra something, rather than Linton's spectacular career and honors, is the focus, and the beauty, of Azoury's unusual paper on the Linton Whitaker legacy. To accomplish this the authors used several methods. Departmental records and curricula vitae were reviewed for data collection, and personal correspondence was used for further clarification when needed.

Forty-five surgeons were included in the study. From 1980 to 2011, 34 completed craniofacial fellowship training under Dr. Whitaker, while 11 completed residency training under him as chief of plastic surgery followed by cleft/craniofacial fellowship training. The majority continued active craniofacial practice after training (83.3%) and practice in an academic setting (78.0%). Overall, their mean \pm SD number of publications was 76 ± 81 (range, 2–339); citations, 1565 ± 1636 (3–6590); book chapters, 23 ± 29 (0–135); and H-index, 18 ± 12 (1–45). Six individuals (14.0%) had National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding. Eighteen individuals had other non-NIH grant data available, averaging 13 ± 16 career total grants (0–66) with a mean total funding of US \$8,628,811 (0 to US \$69,111,489).

Of those who completed craniofacial fellowship training under Dr. Whitaker, 80% had academic positions following training and 77.4% had active craniofacial surgery practices. 32.4% were residency program directors, 41.2% were chief/chair, and 55.9% served as directors of craniofacial programs. Overall, the mean \pm SD number of publications for this group was 69 ± 72



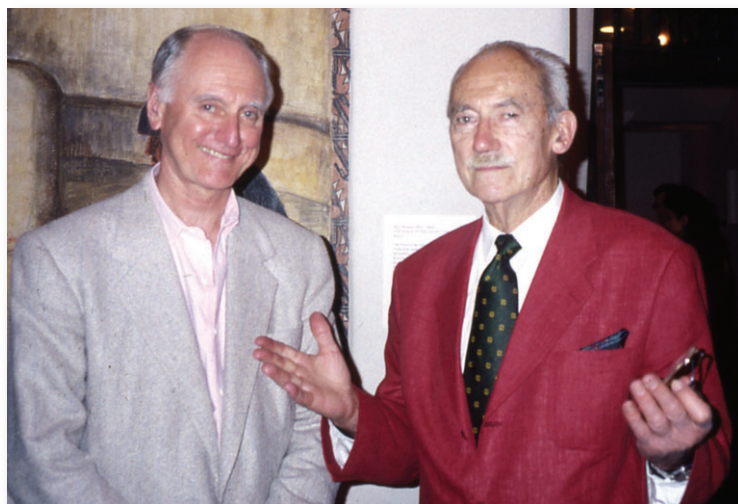
Another example of Altemeier's Rule

(range, 2–276); citations, 1585 ± 1705 (36–6590); book chapters, 25 ± 33 (0–135); books, 2 ± 3 (0–7); H-index, 18 ± 11 (2–45); patents, 1 ± 1 (0–4); and grants, 11 ± 12 (0–47), with a mean total funding of US \$10,204,825 (0 to US \$69,111,489).

On subgroup analysis of the trainees who pursued academia, the majority practiced cleft/craniofacial surgery (83.9%). More than half (53.1%) were promoted to full professor, 46.9% had program director roles, 75.0% directed craniofacial programs, 53.1% achieved the rank of chief/chair, 71.0% served on journal editorial boards, 54.8% had leadership roles in surgical societies, and 19.4% had NIH funding. The overall mean \pm SD number of publications for this group was 94 ± 85 (range, 9–339); citations, 1839 ± 1702 (67–6590); book chapters, 24 ± 30 (0–135); books, 2 ± 2 (0–7); H-index, 20 ± 11 (3–45); patents, 1 ± 1 (0–4); and grants, $15 \pm$

16 (0–66), with a mean total funding of US \$9,531,735 (0 to US \$69,111,489).

Dr. Whitaker has had a distinguished career as a master surgeon, innovator, educator, and leader. Of equal and more lasting importance is the development and success of his trainees. I believe Linton's extra dimension is a gift for inspiring in his disciples the same search for excellence that has driven him.



Dr. Whitaker with his mentor, the Founder of Craniofacial Surgery, Paul Tessier 3

John M. Daly (1947-2021)

Dr. John Daly, Dean of Temple Medical School and former Jonathan Rhoads Professor of Surgery at Penn, died suddenly and unexpectedly on March 26, 2021. The following is largely taken from Dr. DeMatteo's heartfelt communication to the Penn faculty and Dr. Daly's many friends.

John Daly was an outstanding academic surgeon and leader. In addition he was a wonderful person who had a number of strong connections to Penn's department of surgery. A Philadelphia native, he went to college at LaSalle and medical school at Temple. During these formative years, he began working in the lab of a young academic surgeon at Penn named Stan Dudrick (eg Daly, Steiger, Vars, Dudrick: *Postoperative Oral and Intravenous Nutrition*, *Annals of Surgery*, 1974 Nov;180(5):709-15.). His experience as a student established his first Penn connection.

When Stan Dudrick moved to The University of Texas, Houston to become the first chairman of surgery at the new medical school there, Dr. Daly accepted his offer of a surgical residency position. After finishing his general surgery training there he walked over to MD Anderson Hospital where he completed surgical oncology training. There, he worked closely with another HUP trained surgeon, Ted Copeland, establishing another Penn connection (eg Daly....Copeland, Dudrick: *Parenteral nutrition in esophageal cancer patients*. *Annals of Surgery*, 1982 Aug;196(2):203-8.)

The photographs of these important surgical mentors were prominently positioned in Dr Daly's office for the rest of his stellar career. From Houston, he joined the department of surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center as a junior staff surgeon, developing a busy surgical oncology practice and doing some of the foundational clinical research on intra-arterial chemotherapy for colorectal liver metastases.

In 1986 Dr. Daly was recruited to Penn as the inaugural Jonathan Rhoads Professor and chief of the new division of surgical oncology, a third Penn connection. His clinical, research, and educational outcomes were outstanding and his productivity was prodigious. In addition to his R01 grants he established NIH funding of a T32 training grant which supported research of HUP residents during and after the 8 years he remained at Penn. Dr. Daly's productive research program and popularity as a mentor **4** attracted many HUP residents to his laboratory. This group



included Noel Williams, now Rhoads-Harrington Professor of Surgery and Director of the Metabolic and Bariatric Center and Mike Liebermann, now Director of Surgical Oncology at New York Hospital and Cornell. In addition Dr. Daly established a relationship with surgical training programs in Ireland resulting in a group of young Irish surgical residents traveling to Philadelphia to spend time in his laboratory. This group included a number of individuals who have become leaders of academic surgery in Ireland, including John Reynold, now Chair of Surgery at Trinity College Dublin, Paul Redmond, now Chair of Surgery at University College Cork and Kathal Kelly, now CEO of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

It was only a matter of time before Dr. Daly was offered a prominent surgical chair. In 1993 he moved to Cornell and New York Hospital as the Lewis Atterbury Stimpson Professor and Chairman of Surgery. During his time at Penn and Cornell Dr. Daly became recognized as one of America's most prominent and respected academic surgeons. He was elected to the presidency of the Society of Surgical Oncology and the American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition. Since then he has also become Vice President of the American College of Surgeons and the American Surgical Association. In addition he has been chair of the commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. International fame resulted in his election to honorary fellowships in the Royal College of Surgeons of Glasgow and Ireland.

In 2002 he was recruited back to his Philadelphia alma mater, Temple as dean of the medical school. As dean he was highly successful in enhancing the academic performance of Temple's school of medicine. Within two years Dean Daly had raised the money for a new state of the art teaching and research building, now featured prominently by the school.

His fourth connection to our department came several months later when Dr. Daly underwent a liver transplant at HUP for cirrhosis caused by hepatitis C. Always the overachiever, Dr. Daly was discharged after 6 days and was back to work full time in 6 weeks. His liver function remained normal for the rest of his life.

During his tenure as Dean, he lost his beloved wife Mary to cancer. In 2011 Dr. Daly stepped down as dean and became professor emeritus. He continued his surgical practice at Fox Chase,

(continued on page 5)

John Daly *(continued from page 4)*

focusing mostly on breast cancer. But even up to this year it was not unusual for him to be asked by a junior colleague to help with a difficult pancreatotomy or liver resection. In 2018 Dr. Daly was asked by Temple's president to become interim Dean. Not surprisingly the "interim" part had recently been removed from his title and Dr. Daly was again fully at the helm at Temple Med.

The UPenn Department of Surgery extends its sincerest con-

dolences to Dr. Daly's wife Palma and his six children. This master surgeon was a national leader in education and research. A collaborative, energetic, innovative, generous and unselfish leader, he always focused on the good of patients, students, trainees and faculty. He positively influenced and benefitted his friends at Penn and thousands of others. He will be sorely missed but never forgotten.

Oluwadamilola 'Lola' Fayanju Appointed Breast Surgery Chief

We are pleased to announce Oluwadamilola "Lola" Fayanju, MD, MA, MPHS, will be the inaugural Helen O. Dickens Presidential Associate Professor of Surgery in the Perelman School of Medicine and the Chief of Breast Surgery for the University of Pennsylvania Health System. Dr. Fayanju will also be Surgical Director of the Rena Rowan Breast Center and an Innovation Faculty member at the Penn Center for Cancer Care Innovation (PC3I) in the Abramson Cancer Center, effective July 1st.

The Department of Surgery is grateful to Dr. Julia Tchou for her years of service as Section Chief of Breast Surgery and for her continued role as Program Director for the Breast Surgical Oncology fellowship. Dr. Tchou has been appointed Director of Breast Surgery Research and will work closely with Dr. Fayanju to expand research efforts within the breast program. "Dr. Tchou is at the cutting edge of investigation in breast cancer immunotherapy. She is highly committed to clinical care and is one of the busiest breast surgeons in the region," said Dr. Ron DeMatteo.

Dr. Fayanju joins Penn from Duke University, where she is an Associate Professor of Surgery and Population Health Sciences in the Duke University School of Medicine, Associate Director for Disparities & Value in Healthcare with Duke Forge, and Director of the Durham VA Breast Clinic, where she established a breast cancer support group for female veterans. She also founded the Duke Women's Health Community Engagement Task Force and co-directed the Breast Outcomes Research Group.



"I am very excited to join the outstanding teams in both the Penn Department of Surgery and the Breast Oncology Program at Abramson Cancer Center. Penn Medicine is at the forefront of

American medicine with regards to promoting equity for patients and within the health-care workforce. I look forward to working with and learning from colleagues at Penn to pursue high-quality research, practice evidence-based medicine, and engage members of the Philadelphia community in disseminating patient-centered care," said Dr. Lola Fayanju.

Dr. Fayanju's research lies at the intersection of redressing disparities and improving value in oncologic care, particularly through the use of patient-reported outcomes and is funded by the National Institutes of Health. Nationally, she is active in the American Society of Breast Surgeons, the Association for Academic Surgery, the Society of Black Academic Surgeons, and the Society of Surgical Oncology. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Surgical Outcomes Club and on the editorial board of the *Annals of Surgical Oncology*.

She received her undergraduate degree in History and Science and an MA in Comparative Literature from Harvard. She received her MD and a Master's of Population Health Sciences from Washington University in St. Louis, where she also completed her residency in General Surgery. She completed fellowship training in Breast Surgical Oncology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Alumni News

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

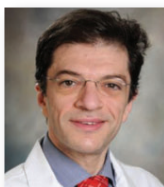
◆ **Reilly Hobbs, MD, MBS** (HUP Chief Resident 2017) is completing his Congenital Heart Surgery Fellowship at the University of Michigan in July will be starting as an Assistant Professor of Surgery in Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery at the University of Utah Children's Hospital.



◆ **Adam Kaye, MD** (HUP Chief Resident 2009) is the Vice-Chair of Trauma Surgery at Overland Park Regional Medical Center in Kansas. He has been elected President of the Chest Wall Injury Society, an international society whose members strive to optimize the operative and non-operative management of patients with chest wall injuries.



◆ **Daniel Kreisel, MD, PhD** (HUP Chief Resident 2003) was recently elected to membership in The Association of American Physicians. This is an unusual honor for surgeons. Members of the AAP are mostly internists. This senior society is the closest analogy to the American Surgical Association for surgical specialists.



◆ **Najjia Mahmoud, MD** has been elected Secretary of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons.



◆ **Jon Morris, MD** is the 2021 University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine Minority Hall of Fame Awardee.



◆ **Joe Serletti, MD** is the American Association of Plastic Surgeons Clinician of the Year. Previous Penn recipients were Linton Whitaker (2017) and Peter Randall (1987). Dr. Serletti was also awarded the 2021 Johns Hopkins School of Medicine's



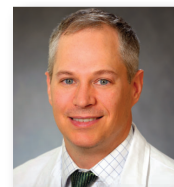
Distinguished

◆ **Laura Huth** was elected to the Executive Committee for the Association of Residency Administrators in Surgery.



◆ Grants have been awarded to 3 faculty members.

Dan Holena, MD - For using audiovisual recording of trauma laparotomy to determine the association between operative performance and postoperative mortality and complications;



Dan Lee, MD, MS - For evaluation of novel urine biomarkers for the detection and treatment of bladder cancer;



Julia Tchou, MD, PhD - For telehealth weight loss program for breast cancer survivors.



◆ **Paris Butler, MD, MPH** won the Perelman School of Medicine Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Faculty Award.



William R. Muir (1929-2021)

William R. Muir (HUP chief resident 1961) died on May 24th, 2021 at his home in Lumberton, New Jersey. He practiced in Mt. Holly from 1960-1994, and for 25 years was chair of the Department of Surgery at Burlington County Memorial Hospital where he also started a residency program. He was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and served in multiple leadership positions in the College.

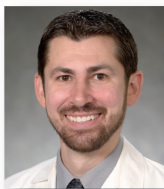
6 He was born in New York City where he attended the Bronx High School of Science. He graduated from Virginia



Military Institute and Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. In retirement, he served in the Indian Health Service in Shipwreck, New Mexico. Dorothy, his beloved wife of 54 years died in 2010. He is survived by three sons, eleven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A celebration of Dr. Muir's life is tentatively planned at Medford Leas on August 27, 2021.

Alumni News *(continued from page 6)*

- ◆ **Caleb Kovell, MD** has won a Penn Pearl Award from Penn medical students.



- ◆ **Ruchika Talwar, MD** a Penn Urology PGY-4, raised more than \$500K to provide oxygen to India.



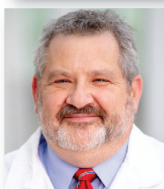
- ◆ **Ali Naji, MD, PhD** have received the NIH highest evaluation for a 7 year multi million dollar grant; autologous CAR engineered T-cell immunity to desensitize patients awaiting kidney transplantation.



- ◆ **Robert Krouse, MD, MS** has been elected a fellow of the American Surgical Association.



- ◆ **Aron Wahrman, MD, MBA, MHCDS** was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Associates of Yale Medical School's Cushing/Whitney Library.



New Faculty

Penn Surgery is proud to welcome Drs. **Leisha Elmore** and **Jennifer Zhang** to the Penn Endocrine and Oncologic Surgery Faculty.

Dr. Elmore is completing her fellowship in Breast Surgical Oncology at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. She received a BS in Psychology with minors in Chemistry and Biology from Duke University, where she was a Robertson Scholar. She attended medical school, completed residency in general surgery, and received a Master's of Population Health Sciences (MPHS) from Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Elmore has a specific interest in improving breast cancer outcomes for underserved populations. She plans to utilize her MPHS to leverage technology to improve communications and to mediate cultural, literacy, and numeracy barriers to cancer care and surgical decision-making. She also seeks to enhance well-being in surgical trainees and faculty. She will be helping launch breast oncology programs at Penn Presbyterian with Dr. Ari Brooks and at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical



Center, where she will be Chief of Breast Surgery.

Dr. Zhang is completing a fellowship in Breast Surgical Oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in New York. She received a BS in Chemical Engineering from MIT, her MD from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and completed residency in general surgery at Beth Israel Medical Center in Boston. During residency, she spent 3 years working in the laboratory of Dr. Ron DeMatteo, Chairman of Surgery while he was on faculty at MSKCC. Dr. Zhang plans to establish a clinical niche treating locally advanced/inflammatory breast cancer. Dr. Zhang's research goals center mainly around understanding the role of tumor-associated macrophages in breast cancer and how to target them to improve breast cancer therapies. She will work in the laboratory of Dr. Robert Vonderheide, the Director of the Abramson Cancer Center. Her clinical practice will be based at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.



(Letter from George Hartzell)

I am cleaning out our basement in preparation for moving to a CCRC, and I found a copy of an operative note where Dr. Johnson was assisted, by Drs. Barker and Hartzell, in a procedure, in 1964, to close an ASD. I suspect that, in this case, as in many others, I might as well have been out on Spruce Street, for all the help that I was providing. This brought to mind your recent article in the Surgical Bulletin where you stated that many residents "bated" Dr. Johnson. Forgive me if I am misquoting you, since I no longer have the article. In any case, I wanted to cast a vote in favor of the old gentleman, who scared me when I was a medical student and whom I found hard to like when I was an Intern. After I returned from my Army service to a third year resident position, however, I gradually became an admirer. I was on his private service, then a bit later on his ward service, and finally chief on his private service. By that time, he was willing to accept a call on Saturday morning, not requiring me to sit around all day, wondering whether he was coming in to make rounds, coming in only if he was worried about something. I learned a lot from him and had the impression that his concern for the welfare of his patients was the main reason for his severe approach to the residents. I suspect, (pronounced "spec") that they have broken the mold, and the benefit that he provided for you and me will no longer be available, at least not in the same form.

I believe that a negative vote might have come from a medical student who innocently asked, "Dr. Johnson? I would like to do more than hold retractors and participate more in this operation." To which the reply was, "Here, hold this", as he attached a Kelly clamp to the drapes by the patient's feet.

*I enjoy your writings and hope that you and your family are well. Your fellow resident from the Ravdin-Rhoads era,
George Hartzell*

Wall of Fame

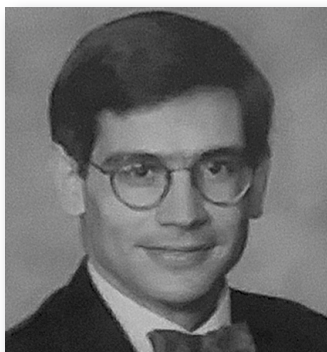
Contributed by Daniel Dempsey

HUP CHIEF SURGICAL RESIDENTS 1996

The HUP general surgery chief resident class of 1996 was exceptionally strong. While these 5 outstanding young surgeons were enjoying their final year of general surgical training, Dr. Clyde Barker began his third 6-year term as John Rhea Barton Professor and Chairman of the department. Though Clyde would eventually have the longest tenure as surgery chairman at Penn by far (18 years), he had already served longer than all other chairs of surgery at Penn except Drs. Frazier (14 years) and Ravdin (15 years). During the 1996 academic year and chief residencies of Drs. Cech, Gorman, Markmann, Reilly, and Smythe, there were other things going on in the world about which they may or may not have been aware: Cal Ripken broke Lou Gehrig's record, playing in his 2131st MLB game (9/6/95); OJ was found not guilty (10/3/95); the million man march took place in Washington, DC (10/16/95); the Braves won the world series, beating the Indians 4 games to 2 (10/28/95); the Dow closed above 5,000 for the first time (11/21/95); Pixar and Disney released Toy Story, the first full length computer animated feature film (11/22/95); Clinton signed a bill getting rid of the national 55mph speed limit (11/28/95); Philadelphia was buried under >30 inches of snow (1/7/96); the Cowboys beat the Steelers in Super Bowl XXX (1/28/96); the computer Deep Blue beat Gary Kasparov in game 1 of a 6 game chess match which Kasparov eventually won (2/10/96); the Menendez brothers were convicted of 1st degree murder in the death of their parents (3/19/96); Mel Gibson's Braveheart won 5 Academy Awards including best picture and best director (3/25/96); Kentucky beat Syracuse in the NCAA basketball finals (4/1/96); the Unabomber Ted Kaczynski was arrested (4/3/96); ValueJet Flight 592 crashed in the Florida Everglades killing 110 (5/11/96); the Colorado Avalanche swept the Florida Panthers to win their first Stanley Cup (6/10/96); the Jordan led Bulls beat Seattle in the NBA finals to win a 4th championship (6/16/96). And our current class of incoming surgical interns had not yet started nursery school.

I can assure you that reviewing the records of the HUP chief surgical resident class of 1996 is a humbling experience. They were all spectacular surgical residents.

Alex Charles Cech was
8 born in New York City and



graduated high school at the Horace Mann School there. He received a combined BS/MS degree from Yale in biochemistry with honors in 1985, and then received his MD in 1989 from Duke where he was junior AOA. Alex's letters of recommendation for surgical residency were extraordinary. Dr. Sabiston described him as "an exceptional student, deserving of an unusually high recommendation". Dr. Stuart Aaronson, the chief of the laboratory of cellular and molecular biology at the NIH described Alex as an "immensely talented young scientist". Alex matched at Penn in 1989 and did extremely well. He spent 2 years in the laboratory of Dr. John Daly and co-authored several peer reviewed papers. His clinical evaluations were consistently excellent, and in his letter of recommendation in support of Alex's application for plastic surgery fellowship, Dr. Barker described him as one of "our finest clinical residents who I can recommend with great enthusiasm". After finishing his general surgery training in 1996, Alex did his fellowship in plastic and reconstructive surgery at Penn, and then did further training in microsurgery and cancer reconstruction at Sloane Kettering. Currently Alex practices plastic and reconstructive surgery in Hartford, Connecticut where he is on the teaching faculty at University of Connecticut School of Medicine. He has been named to the "Best Doctors" list in Hartford for the last 15 years.

Robert Charles Gorman

was born in Montclair, New Jersey. In 1984 he graduated with highest honors from New Jersey Institute of Technology with a BS in chemical engineering and chemistry. He was valedictorian in a class of over 700 students. Rob then did graduate work in the engineering school at Penn before entering medical school at Robert Wood Johnson (Rutgers) where he got his MD in 1989, having been elected to junior AOA. In his application for surgical residency Rob stated that his goal was "academic surgery ideally to pursue areas of research that would require engineering and surgical expertise". Obviously he knew where he was going. His letters of recommendation for surgical residency all describe him as "outstanding", "exceptional", or "superb". He matched at HUP in 1989 and rapidly distinguished himself as one of the best surgical residents ever to train here. Dr. Mackie said that Rob was "one of the most outstanding surgical trainees I have ever known". One of his senior residents, Jim Luketich, said "if he had a twin brother I would recruit him". Rob scored 99 percentile on the ABSITE for 7 consecutive years. He spent 2 years in Dr. Hank Edmunds' lab and then did a CT fellowship at HUP. He joined the



(continued on page 9)

Wall of Fame *(continued from page 8)*

faculty at Penn in the division of cardiac surgery and rapidly rose to the rank of Professor. Along with his brother Joe, Rob has run a productive innovative cardiac lab at Penn for many years. He has well over 300 peer reviewed papers and has mentored many HUP surgical residents in the lab.

James Francis Markmann was born in Philadelphia and obtained his BA from LaSalle College in 1983. In 1989 he graduated Penn Med School with an MD, PhD. His PhD was in immunology and during this time he worked in the lab with Drs. Clyde Barker, Ali Najj et al. In his letter of recommendation in support of Jim's residency application, Dr. Len Miller pointed out that his CV at that time would support "promotion to associate professor rank in most departments of surgery". Dr. Rosato's letter gave his "very strongest possible recommendation" for general surgery residency. Jim's performance as a resident was excellent as expected, and he continued to keep his hand in the research lab. In his letter of recommendation in support of Jim's application for transplant surgery fellowship, Dr. Barker stated, "if there is a better candidate for a transplant fellowship in the country this year, I would be surprised". Jim did his fellowship at UCLA and then returned to join the faculty at Penn. In 2007 he was recruited to MGH where he is currently the chief of the division of transplantation and the Claude Welch Professor of Surgery at Harvard. He is also the surgical director of the liver, pancreas, and islet transplant programs, and the clinical director of the MGH transplantation center. Jim has over 300 peer reviewed papers, many in high impact journals, and he has been continuously funded by NIH for over 15 years. He has received the Julius Mackie Distinguished Graduate Award from Penn Surgery.



Kathleen Joyce Reilly was born in Englewood, New Jersey. She received her BA in biochemistry, with high honors from Penn in 1985. She then matriculated at Penn Medical School where she received her MD in 1989. Kathy's performance as a medical student was impressive and her letters of recommendation in support of her application for surgical residency were all excellent. Dr. Barker described her



as "one of the outstanding candidates for surgical training in the class; excellent in all respects"; and Dr. Rosato gave her his "strongest recommendation". Another attending said she was one of the best students with whom he had ever worked. In addition to being an outstanding student, as described in her Dean's letter, Kathy was also an accomplished pianist and a licensed pilot when she applied for residency. She matched at HUP for general surgery in 1989 and her performance over the next 7 years was outstanding, scoring above the 95th percentile on the ABSITE numerous years. Her evaluations were consistently excellent. Kathy spent 2 years in the Rombeau lab investigating mediators of intestinal mucosal growth and function. Upon completion of her general surgery residency, she joined the teaching service at Crozer Chester medical center. Kathy was recruited to the surgical faculty at Temple 15 years ago and maintained a busy breast surgery practice there until retirement in 2020.

William Roy Smythe was born in Temple, Texas. He graduated from Belton High School as salutatorian and was All Texas in football and track (discus). As a National Merit Scholar he attended Baylor University, playing varsity football as a member of the 1980 undefeated SWC championship team. Roy attended medical school at Texas A+M graduating first in his class and AOA. During medical school, he was a Dana Scholar at Penn, working in transplant immunology. In a residency recommendation letter, Don Dafoe described Roy as "a unique blend of intellect, physical capabilities, congeniality, and tact which constitute the raw material of a superb surgeon". Dennis Lynch said Roy was "one of the best students ever". Needless to say, Roy matched at HUP in 1989, and as described in Dr. Barker's letter of recommendation for fellowship, "was one of the most outstanding surgical residents we have had at HUP". He worked in the Kaiser/Albelda lab, coauthoring over 20 manuscripts and participating in some of the seminal investigations on gene therapy for mesothelioma. Roy won multiple awards as a resident (Rhoads, Inouye, Penn Pearls), and upon graduating he entered the CT fellowship at HUP. After achieving tenure at MD Anderson, Roy moved to the Scott/White Clinic as chairman of surgery. Currently he is CEO of SomaLogic. Roy has also received the Mackie Distinguished Graduate Award from Penn Surgery



Catching-up with . . . Heidi Yeh

Contributed by Jon Morris

Dr. Heidi Yeh graduated Magna Cum Laude from Harvard College in 1992 with a BA in Biochemistry and would subsequently attend the Perelman School of Medicine. Heidi graduated from Penn Med in 1997 where she received the Morton McCutcheon Memorial Prize in Research (1995), election to the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society (1996), the American Medical Women's Association Scholarship Citation (1997) and the I.S. Ravdin Prize in Surgery (1997) as the medical student in the graduating class who has evidenced sustained originality and thoroughness in surgical studies. Dr. Yeh took her General Surgical residency at the



Heidi in 2004

Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (1997-2004) including a two year postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Pathology with Dr. Carl June. Following a clinical transplant fellowship at Penn (2004-2006) and a year on our faculty, Heidi was recruited to the Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts General Hospital in 2007 as an Assistant Professor of Surgery. She was promoted to Associate Professor in 2017. She has been the Associate Surgical Director of the Liver Transplant Program since 2018. In 2019, Dr. Yeh received the Nathaniel Bowditch Award from the MGH for her significant contribution to improving the quality of patient care while reducing cost.

A Conversation with Heidi

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

Heidi: *Post-trauma call breakfast vouchers—I used to go to the cafeteria and get the custom-made omelettes with every single topping available and eat all 3 pounds of it.*

JoMo: Which faculty influenced you the most and why?

Heidi: *I started making this list in my head and it got longer and longer and then it got to the point where there were so many that I was afraid it was becoming offensive to leave anybody out, but I think I do have to at least mention Ali Naji, since it was doing a living donor kidney transplant with him and his delightful rounds that turned me from surgical oncology to transplant! And that the residents still laugh when I tell them the joke that you (Jon Morris) used to tell about interns closing incisions, “The fibroblasts are winning!”*

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

Heidi: *HB Kim somehow ended up being my chief for almost my entire PGY-3 year! I still call him for advice sometimes and he is still wise and imperturbable, although I have discovered that he also has an active sense of humor that I was probably too intimidated to appreciate as a junior resident.*

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

Heidi: *There were so many fantastic residents, and more were impressive than not. But one of my clearest memories as a senior resident is taking Paige Porrett through her first open appy (does anybody*

even do those anymore?) and the look on her face when she popped the swollen appendix out of the incision. I may need to have her teach me how to do a uterine transplant soon.

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

Heidi: *One of our former fellows called me up to tell me about a difficult pedi liver he had done with his senior colleagues and how he ended up showing them how to do a bicaval implantation instead of their usual piggyback. Not that bicaval implantation is impressive or unusual, at all, or that I am even solely responsible for teaching him how to do a liver transplant, but hey, he's all grown up now!*

JoMo: What do you miss most about Philadelphia?

Heidi: *Penn and our first house—although maybe it's just being young and having babies that I miss more than the physical structure.*

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

Heidi: *I'm so bad at keeping in touch, whoever I mention will probably say, “what, who? I never hear from her!” But I do enjoy hearing from Rachel Kelz, Sam Hendren, and Paige Porrett. And bumping into people at conferences and discovering that they are working one state over (there are Philadelphia suburbs further away from HUP than a couple state lines are from Boston.)*

I got a text the other day with some instructions for working up and admitting a patient in the ER—it turned out to be Frank

(continued on page 11)

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

Spitz, whose resident at the time was also named Heidi.

I get texts from Jim Markmann, also, but he is still my boss, so I think that is not a case of mistaken identity!

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

Heidi: *I do liver, kidney, and pancreas transplants and dialysis access in adults. And liver and kidney transplants in kids. Sometimes, I get called to help with liver or pancreas resections and I think how narrowly I escaped being the one having to decide “I’m going to resect this tumor growing into all these blood vessels necessary to keep the liver alive.”*

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

Heidi: *Do plants count? My office window is full of plants and my aloe plant has given rise to so many babies that I think everybody in my hall has one of my aloe offspring in their office, too. I have a few indoor banana trees and an avocado tree at home. They are in large rolling crates so I can bring them outdoors during the few months of warmth and sunshine we get in New England. In the back yard, we grew sunflowers, raspberries, tomatoes, cucumbers, butternut squash, pumpkins, arugula, cilantro, basil, corn, string beans, and zucchini in the back yard. I also tried to grow rhubarb, but it was relentlessly eaten by some animal from the forest, so the humans never got to have any.*

JoMo: Tell us about your family.

Heidi: *David was a software engineer for many years, at Microsoft, then a start-up, and then Google, before deciding 5 years ago that he wanted to go back to graduate school and get a PhD, first in computer science education and then switching to machine learning. He claims to be graduating this spring and is applying for jobs, but I haven’t seen any dissertation writing yet, although he did burn the midnight oil cranking out 3 papers for a conference deadline earlier this week!*

Anthony is 22 and recently graduated from MIT after doing a double major in computer science and math. He briefly considered going to Norway for graduate school in mathematics, and I was looking forward to visiting him in Scandinavia, but instead, he is staying at MIT for a 5th year masters in natural language processing. You can see which parent he takes after, in spite of (or maybe because of) being dragged around HUP in a



(left to right) Cody, Piper and Anthony

surgical intern’s belly for his entire prenatal life. For four years (before the pandemic), he and David were studying in the same department in the same building, but somehow managed never to see each other on campus.

Piper is 19 and after spending a gap year dancing and working retail, is now a freshman at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, studying film. She is going to South Korea this summer, purportedly to do a foreign language program, and says she will look for a concurrent film internship, but I suspect she will also audition for K-pop idol contracts! At least once a week, I see her dragging her tripod and camera out into the yard (even in sub-zero weather!) to film herself doing a new dance, often in an outfit concocted out of my boring, middle-aged closet, which somehow transforms into the latest hip and chic thing when she puts them on. If it’s acceptable to associate anything positive with the COVID pandemic, it has been so nice to have our two remoting children at home for this bonus year.

Cody is 13 and also enjoyed having his older brother and sister at home. He has been taller than me for a couple years, now and is always grinning at some secret joke. We used to play a lot of board games starting when he was 4 or 5 years old, and he would recite the rules to us when we didn’t even know he could read, as we struggled to figure out the game play. He has moved on to computer games, and I am still struggling to figure out the game play. Unfortunately, anything simple enough for me to learn gets boring pretty quickly for him, and most of the time, the kids end up playing themselves while I look at old photos of them on my screen saver.



Penn Surgery

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

Previous Alumni Newsletters - www.uphs.upenn.edu/surgery/Education/penn_surgery_society.html



Follow Penn Surgery on Twitter @pennsurgery



SPRING 2021

Catching-up with . . . *(continued from page 11)*

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

Heidi: *My favorite book in recent times is "The Night Circus" by Erin Morgenstern. My daughter actually bought it for me for Christmas and it's a beautiful story about two magicians (in the wizarding and not the performing sense of the word) who use a circus, that is only open after dark, to disguise their real magic as illusions and tricks. And how the magical circus affects the non-magical people. Otherwise, I am mostly reading tour books while I dream of traveling again.*

This year, I also discovered "Blown Away", a glass blowing contest show. They make some amazing pieces!

Editor in Chief:

Clyde F. Barker, MD
Donald Guthrie Professor of Surgery

Editorial Board:

Ronald P. DeMatteo, MD
Chairman, Department of Surgery

Jon B. Morris, MD
Vice Chair of Education

Daniel T. Dempsey, MD
Chief of Gastrointestinal Surgery

James L. Mullen, MD
Vice Chair of Administration

Graphic Design:

Robin Noel
Graphic Artist/Web Administrator