



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 A Philadelphia Landmark



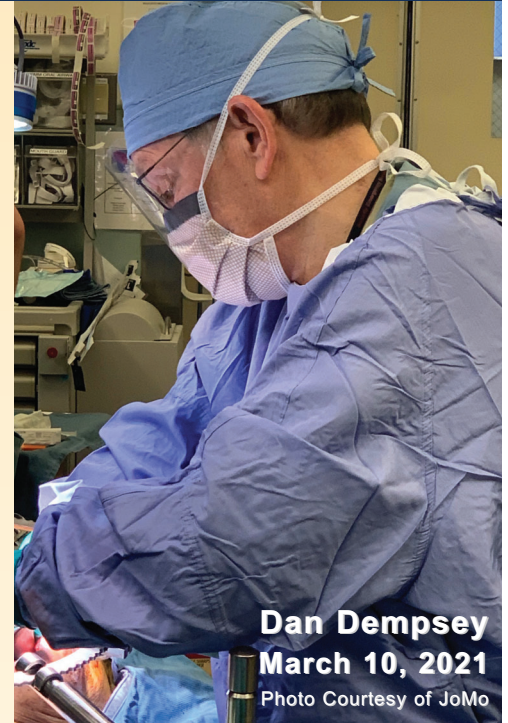
**Ron DeMatteo, MD**  
John Rhea Barton  
Professor and Chair,  
Department of Surgery

For the second consecutive Newsletter, I am (un)happy to announce the retirement of one of our preeminent surgeons. Daniel Dempsey MD FACS MBA will retire in June. His academic career has been stellar. He graduated from Princeton University magna cum laude and then the University of Rochester Medical School. After a residency in General Surgery at Penn, he joined the faculty at Temple and eventually became the Chief of General Surgery (1996-99). Briefly, he was the Chair of Surgery at Pennsylvania Hospital. Then, Temple recruited him back to be the Chair of Surgery for 11 years. Always the academic, he completed an MBA from Temple in 2011, and of course was the Valedictorian. That same year, he returned to Penn as the Chief of the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery and Assistant Director of Perioperative Services. He was the President of multiple societies, including the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery and Philadelphia County Medical Society. Nationally, he is a member of all the elite surgical organizations, including the Halsted Society, Southern Surgical Association, and American Surgical Association.

raincoat and was unassuming, but astonishingly shrewd. Unlike Dr. Dempsey, he drove a battered car, smoked a cigar, and owned a Bassett hound named Dog. After probing a suspect, Columbo would always reenter the room to ask a final question by starting with his signature catchphrase “Just one more thing...”

Dr. Dempsey embodies surgical skill, caring, and dedication. He has been a role model for a generation of surgeons – in the operating room and at the bedside. He is exceptionally compassionate and is a favorite of medical students, residents, nurses, and other support staff. His teaching skill has been widely recognized with numerous awards during his career. He is often the voice of reason at M&M. He certainly deserved induction into the Penn Academy of Master Clinicians in 2018.

His office is next to mine, which has allowed me to take advantage of his sage advice, and vast experience. Like Columbo, Dr. Dempsey analyzes everything, from multiple angles, relentlessly. It is not unusual for him to text me at night or on the weekend to deliver a brilliant new thought on a prior discussion. Congratulations for a lifelong devotion to patients, teaching, leadership, and surgery. His last OR day was today (see photo). Fortunately, he will still “be around” after June, no doubt to point out “Just one more thing.”



**Dan Dempsey**  
March 10, 2021  
Photo Courtesy of JoMo

### IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Chair	1
From the Editor	2-3
Master Clinicians	3
Center for Surgical Health	4
Scott Adzick Award	5
Alumni News	6
Wall of Fame	7-8
Catching-Up	9-12

For those old enough to remember, he reminds me of the Peter Falk character Lieutenant Columbo, one of the most popular TV creations of all time. Columbo wore a wrinkled



## From the Editor

Clyde F. Barker, M.D.

Congratulations are very much due to Todd Bauer for his election as President of the Society of Clinical Surgery and to Rachel Kelz as President elect. It must be rare for graduates of the same residency program to be back to back presidents of such an important society. Additionally it is notable that Rachel will

be the Society's first woman president. Founded in 1903 by Harvey Cushing this society is one of surgery's most exclusive and prestigious. Election to its limited membership can only occur before age 55 (until recently this age limit was 45). Another unique aspect is that during the annual meeting, always held at a university hospital, the members are invited into the host's operating rooms where they can stand elbow-to-elbow with the surgeon and discuss the procedure while it is going on.



Todd w. Bauer, MD

Most probably think of the Society of Clinical Surgery as a boutique club and that the value of belonging is limited to the prestige of being elected and the opportunity to make friends with other leaders of academic surgery. Maybe so, but study of the Society's history reveals that at one time it served another important purpose. It was a parent of the American College of Surgeons. How this small travel club spawned the world's largest surgical organization is an interesting story that has been largely forgotten. I doubt that even Todd and Rachel know about it.

In 1900 Harvey Cushing, Albert Ochsner and William Mayo were attending a meeting of the International Surgical Congress in Paris. To them this Congress seemed an endless series of dull papers. During a break they sat on a bridge overlooking the Seine complaining to one another that since they were too young for election to major surgical societies, they were undervalued. They were bored with the stilted presentations being given by the elite elder surgeons, many in languages they couldn't understand. They decided to start a society of their own. Its members would be university surgeons interested in teaching and research but the purpose of their new society would be more practical. The 2 members would get together at various university centers,

watch each other operate and discuss and critique each case as it progressed. Importantly no one over age 45 could be elected to membership. They called it the Society of Clinical Surgery.

A few years later Franklin Martin, not a member, was invited to a meeting of the new society. He was intrigued by the openness of its format. He wondered if he could capture its essence and provide for many the educational experience then being enjoyed by only the few members of the Society of Clinical Surgery.

As he later told the story, Franklin Martin, the founding editor of Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics, decided to write the 3000 subscribers of his journal, inviting them to a meeting in Chicago where at multiple hospitals in small groups they would



Rachel R. Kelz, MD

watch operations by the city's best surgeons. Sixteen hundred surgeons applied to attend the meeting which he called the Clinical Congress of the Surgeons of North America. It lasted two weeks and was a huge success.

He then got another Dr. Martin (not a relative) to organize further meetings of this new organization. This was Edward Martin, HUP's John Rhea Barton Professor and Chairman. To plan the next Congress in Philadelphia Edward Martin met with a group of his friends from the Society of Clinical Surgery, including Rudolph Matas, Albert Ochsner, the Mayo brothers and GMT Finney of Johns Hopkins. Among the multiple clinics held in various Philadelphia hospitals during the 1911 Congress was a demonstration by Alexis Carrel of his vascular suturing technique. Another demonstration, claiming to be the first human to human kidney transplant was performed by former Penn faculty member Levi J. Hammond. The kidney donor had been killed in an accident 24 hours before. It was proclaimed a success by the New York Times but long-term follow-up couldn't have been very good since organ preservation and immunosuppression were yet to be invented. The Congress was attended by more than 1000 surgeons and was a resounding success.

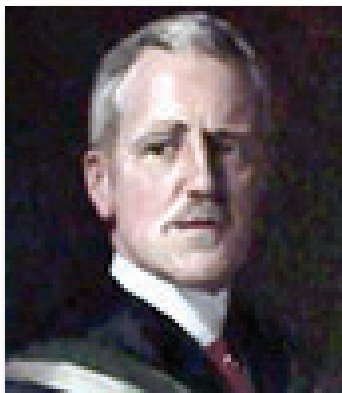
After another successful meeting of the Congress in New York, the 1913 meeting was planned for Washington, DC. Again Edward Martin was to be the president. Again the planners of the meeting were leaders of the Society of Clinical Surgery. To formalize future Congresses, with Franklin Martin they set forth bylaws, a board of governors, and a 12 member governing board of regents. They decided to change the name to *The*

(continued on page 3)

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

*American College of Surgeons.* The first *Board of Regents* included Edward Martin and other members of the *Society of Clinical Surgery*.

Over the years attempts have been made by the College to emulate the meetings of the *Society of Clinical Surgery*, especially the opportunity for watching and discussing ongoing operations. Movies of operations were one of the first methods. Edward Martin was a pioneer of this. When television became available in the 1940s live operations were shown to an audience by closed circuit TV. Attendees could discuss the case or even harass the surgeon during the operation. This was an entertaining and very popular segment of the program. It was eventually discontinued because it might encourage the surgeon to hurry a complex oper-



**Edward Martin**

ation in order to finish it on schedule. As a resident, I had an opportunity to scrub on a few of these live TV operations and to observe the consequences of the pressure.

So what is the present status of the Society of Clinical Surgery now that its relationship with the American College of Surgeons is long forgotten? Its members still enjoy the intimacy and informality of watching each other operate. HUP's Edward Martin and the Society's role in this history may not be remembered but his legacy is continued

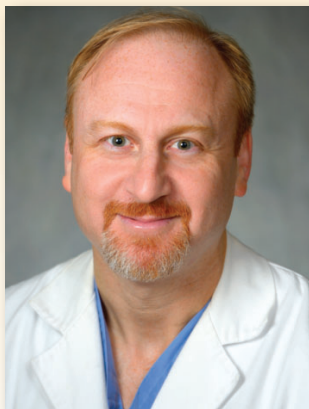
through the large number of HUP members, 20 including Todd and Rachel. Edward Martin would no doubt be pleased with the present leadership.

# New Members of the Academy of Master Clinicians

In 2020 twelve clinicians from Penn Medicine departments were elected to the Academy of Master Clinicians. From Surgery they selected Joshua Bleier and Michael Nance.

**Joshua I.S. Bleier, MD**, Professor of Clinical Surgery, Vice-Chair, Department of Surgery, Pennsylvania Hospital (PAH), Section Chief, Colon and Rectal Surgery, PAH, Program Director, Colon and Rectal Fellowship Chair.

Josh graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He completed his surgery residency at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center in 2007 and a Colon & Rectal Surgery fellowship at University of Minnesota Hospitals in 2008. Since then he has been on the Penn faculty and was promoted to full professor in 2019.



**Joshua Bleier**

**Michael L. Nance, MD**, Professor of Surgery, Josephine J. and John M. Templeton Jr. Chair in Pediatric Trauma, Director of the Pediatric Trauma Program at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and an investigator at the Center for Injury Research and Prevention.

Mike graduated from Louisiana State University School of Medicine. He was HUP chief resident (1995) and a HUP fellow

in Surgical Critical Care (1996). He was the Louise Schnauffer Senior Fellow in Pediatric Surgery at CHOP (1998). Since then has been on the Penn faculty and was promoted full professor in 2010.

The Academy of Master Clinicians was started in 2013 to recognize clinicians who exemplify the highest standards of clinical excellence, humanism and professionalism. Election to this Academy is the highest clinical honor to be bestowed on a Penn physician. Master Clinicians are known for developing and implementing innovative programs. They have focused on professionalism, career mentoring of medical students, promoting and enhancing a culture of clinical excellence, promoting wellness, reducing burnout and overcoming barriers to exceptional patient care.

Surgeon members elected to the Academy in previous years are Najjia Mahmoud, Pat Reilly, Ron Fairman, Tom Guzzo, Dahlia Sataloff, Stephen Kovach, Dan Dempsey, Wilson Szeto and Ben Chang.

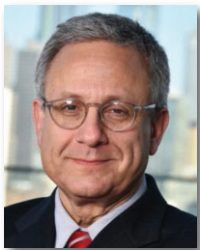


**Michael Nance**



**Contributed by Matt Goldshore**

The Penn Medicine Department of Surgery has established The Center for Surgical Health (CSH), an interdisciplinary academic-community partnership focused on surgical equity. The Center is lead by **Jon B. Morris, MD** (Director), **Matt Goldshore, MD, PhD, MPH (PGY5)** (Deputy Director) and **Carrie Zimmerman (MS4)** (Associate Deputy Director).



**Jon Morris**



**Matt Goldshore**



**Carrie Zimmerman**

The mission of CSH is to support, educate and advocate for vulnerable persons with surgical diseases. The vision is to create a sustainable infrastructure through which all members of our community can access high-quality surgical care. The CSH partners with numerous community organizations to address all aspects of the social determinants of surgical health (eg. surgical access to insurance). The Center has collaborative clinical relationships with Puentes De Salud, Penn Mercy (HUP – Cedar Avenue) and the Sayre Health Center.

While the primary goal of CSH is to improve access to surgery, a vulnerable patient's interactions with surgical care is impacted by a broad host of factors outside of medicine. In order to fully impact the surgical health of our community, CSH believes that change must occur in clinical care as well as in research, policy and education. As a result, CSH has grown into an interdisciplinary center including the CSH Clinics, the CSH Classroom, the CSH Research Lab and the CSH Policy Lab.

The CSH Clinics is grounded in community engagement throughout Philadelphia. CSH senior residents and medical students examine referred patients at CSH co-located clinics. When a surgical diagnosis is confirmed, the patient is assigned to a personal patient navigator (PPN) who supports the patient throughout the perioperative continuum. The Personal Patient Navigation (PPN) program is open to Penn students with an interest in surgical equity. PPNs are required to complete training **4** in the social determinants of surgical health, health care pol-

icy and the landscape of public benefits (including Medicaid), and immigration law. The Perelman School of Medicine, the School of Nursing, the Carey School of Law and the School of Social Policy and Practice are represented in the Spring 2021 cohort of 54 PPNs.

The CSH model started within general surgery, but the program now partners with various Penn surgical subspecialty services including Orthopedics, Urology, Plastic Surgery, Hand Surgery, OB/GYN and ENT.

In the last 16 months, CSH has received 73 referrals and performed 27 operations. The Center is currently actively caring for 17 patients with pending pre-operative appointments and surgeries in the next 6 weeks.

The CSH Research Lab is building an interdisciplinary cadre of clinical and public health scientists to solve problems surrounding access to and quality of surgical care for marginalized populations. The goal of the Research Lab is to provide a space for young investigators to develop cross-disciplinary academic partnerships that would otherwise be challenging to establish.

The CSH Policy Lab is developing relationships with local, state and national political leaders to implement population-based policy changes based on the CSH Clinics care model. The Policy Lab runs the Summer Advocacy Institute, a problem-based interdisciplinary program where Penn students are selected to solve a surgical health care problem, impacting marginalized communities. The experience culminates with a presentation to a local-, state- or national stakeholder with the goal of implementing real policy or practice changes that directly impact communities.

The CSH Classroom has developed and implemented *Operation Equity* an innovative curriculum focused on the social determinants of surgical health. This campus-wide elective equips students with a broad overview of factors that influence disparities in surgery. By the end of the course students will be able to describe factors that influence differential surgical access and outcomes for vulnerable communities, participate in interdisciplinary dialogue about the social determinants of surgical health, provide care which is sensitive to all aspects of a patient's lived experience, identity, and circumstance. Most importantly they will become devoted advocates for vulnerable surgical patients through clinical care, scholarship and policy change.

This past September, CSH leadership presented the program to Kevin B. Mahoney, the CEO of the University of Pennsylvania Health System. Given its success Mr. Mahoney agreed to provide 3-years of funding support to CSH.

Anyone with a patient referral, question or a desire to help with the Clinic, should directly contact Dr. Jon B. Morris or Dr. Matt Goldshore or email: [csh@pennmedicine.upenn.edu](mailto:csh@pennmedicine.upenn.edu).

# Scott Adzick Recipient of the ACTS Distinguished Investigator Award

**N. Scott Adzick, MD, MMM** has been selected to receive the 2021 Association for Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS) Distinguished Investigator Award: Translation from Proof of Concept to Widespread Clinical Practice.

The Association for Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS) supports those who are committed to applying scientific methodologies to accelerate advances in human health. It recognizes senior investigators whose innovative research or education leadership has had a major impact on or through clinical and translational science.

Dr. Adzick is the Surgeon in Chief at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) as well as the director of CHOP's Center for Fetal Diagnosis and Treatment which he founded in 1995. He is also the C. Everett Koop Professor of Pediatric Surgery at CHOP and a professor of pediatrics obstetrics and gynecology at the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania.

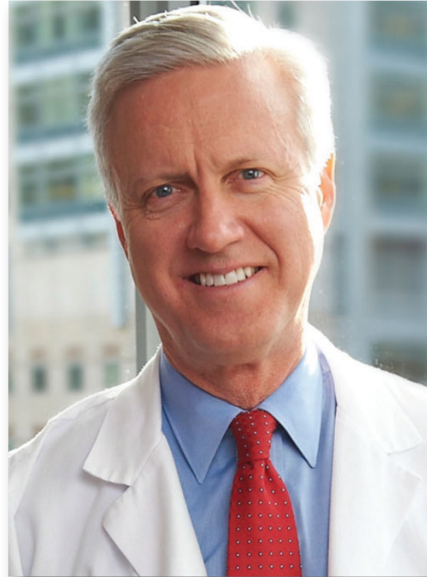
Dr. Adzick earned his A.B. from Harvard College in 1975, his MD from Harvard Medical School in 1979, and in 2003 a Masters of Medical Management degree from Carnegie Mellon University. He completed his general surgical training at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1986. From 1983 to 1985 he was a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Surgery of the University of California, San Francisco where he worked with Michael Harrison in the development of the first fetal surgical program, initially with animal models and then progressing to clinical application.

In 1995 he moved to Philadelphia as the Chief of Surgery at CHOP and established the Center for Fetal Diagnosis and Treatment.

Scott Adzick is an internationally recognized pioneer in fetal surgery. In fetal surgery the unborn baby is exposed through an incision in the mother's uterus allowing the abnormality in the fetus to be surgically corrected under direct vision. The incision is then closed and the baby is allowed to develop normally and undergo birth on schedule.

Scott Adzick has dedicated his career to the pursuit of this groundbreaking prenatal treatment for life-threatening and debilitating defects. He was the leader of a breakthrough randomized trial that demonstrated that performing fetal surgery for spina bifida results in significantly improved outcomes compared to the

paralysis usually occurring despite conventional postnatal repair. He is the most experienced and respected surgeon involved with this outstanding new treatment. Other fetal abnormalities that he



has successfully treated by this approach include urinary tract obstruction that would fatally damage the kidneys, resection of lung lesions and other life threatening chest masses. Although straightforward and bold in concept, the success of fetal surgery has required development of intricate methods of protecting the normal physiology and life of both the baby and mother. His productive research toward these goals has been supported by the NIH for more than 30 years. He has authored more than 600 peer-reviewed publications and has an H index of 103.

In addition to performing a full spectrum of standard pediatric surgical operations, Dr. Adzick has also performed more than 500 pancreatectomies for cure of hyperinsulinism, the most of any surgeon in the world. Dr. Adzick's many awards include the 1999 presidential class contributions to the Republic of Poland, the 2012 clinical trial of the year award of the Society for Clinical Trials, the 2013 John Scott award of the City trusts of Philadelphia and the Samuel D Gross prize of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

Dr. Scott's memberships include the American Pediatric Surgical Association of which he has been chairman of the program committee, the National Academy of Medicine, the Society of University Surgeons and the American Surgical Association. He is an honorary member of the British Association of Pediatric Surgery, the Canadian Association of Pediatric Surgery and the Chilean Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He has been President of the International Fetal Medicine and Surgery Society.

Dr. Adzick is on the editorial boards of the *Annals of Surgery*, the *Journal of Pediatric Surgery*, *Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy*, *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* and the *European Journal of Pediatric Surgery*.

As director of the CHOP pediatric surgery fellowship, he has trained more than 30 pediatric surgeons many of whom serve in leadership positions in this field in the U.S. and around the world. In his research laboratory he has trained more than 50 investigators, a number of whom have become professors at other university medical schools.

# Alumni News

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

◆ **Ricardo Sanchez-Ortiz, MD** (2002 Urology graduate) has been elected President of the American Urological Association’s Southeastern Section. He is currently Assistant Professor of Urology at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine, and Adjunct Associate Professor of Urology, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.



◆ **Giorgos Karakousis, MD** has been awarded a James IV Traveling Fellowship from the James IV Association of Surgeons. This is a highly competitive award that funds the awardee to travel to several expert centers of their choosing across the world. The purpose is to exchange the latest approaches and techniques with other surgical leaders.



◆ **Evgeniy Eruslanov, PhD** was awarded a \$900K grant from Janssen.



◆ **Todd Bauer, MD** (HUP chief resident 2002) is Chief of Surgical Oncology at the University of Virginia. He is a highly successful surgeon scientist, funded by NIH for the last 14 years. At the societies recent meeting Todd was elected President of the Society of Clinical Surgery, one of the oldest and most prestigious professional societies.



◆ **Rachel Kelz, MD**, William Maul Measey Professor in Surgery, Division of Endocrine and Oncologic Surgery, was named President-Elect of the Society of Clinical Surgery, one of the oldest and most prestigious professional societies.

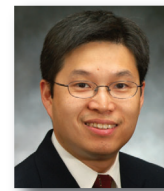


## Departure

◆ **David Lee, MD** has been appointed Professor of Urology. Director of the Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Program at University California - Irvine.



◆ **Wilson Y. Szeto, MD**, Professor of Surgery, is secretary-elect of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons 2021-2022.



◆ **Jash Datta, MD** (Chief Resident HUP 2017) was named the Association for Academic Surgery Joel J. Roslyn Faculty Awardee 2021-2022 for his grant proposal “Reprogramming tolerogenic signaling in myeloid derived suppressor cells by targeting tumor-intrinsic Cxcl1 in Ras-p53 cooperative pancreatic cancer.” Jash is currently Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. He is a hepatobiliary, pancreatic, and gastrointestinal surgical oncologist. His laboratory in GI cancer immunology focuses on understanding how tumor-intrinsic transcriptional programs orchestrate immune suppression in the pancreatic tumor microenvironment, specifically deciphering and targeting the dominant tolerogenic myeloid cell-derived signaling mechanisms that govern T-cell exclusion.



## Julius Mackie Distinguished Graduate Lectureship

The 2020 event was postponed because of the pandemic. This years lecture will be given virtually on May 20, 2021.

“The Sun Rises in the West”



**Joseph Y. Woo, MD**

Norman E. Shumway Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery  
Chair, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery  
Stanford University School of Medicine  
Stanford, California

# Wall of Fame

Contributed by Daniel Dempsey

## HUP CHIEF SURGICAL RESIDENTS 2015

The HUP chief surgical resident class of 2015 was comprised of 6 excellent young surgeons, 4 women (Cintolo, Gupta, Mathew, Vrecenak) and 2 men (McGarvey, Shang). This was the highest proportion of female chief residents to date. While they were busy completing this all important year of surgical training, there was a lot going on in the world: ISIS came to power, declaring an Islamic Caliphate (6/29/14); Scotland voted to stay in the UK (9/18/14); the San Francisco Giants beat the Kansas City Royals in the World Series (10/29/14); Mario Cuomo and Leonard Nimoy died (1/1 and 2/27/15); the Seahawks lost to the Patriots in Super Bowl 49 (2/1/15); in March Madness, Wisconsin upset Kentucky then lost to Duke in the finals; a speeding Amtrak train derailed in Philadelphia with fatal results (5/13/15); American Pharoah won the horse racing triple crown (6/6/15); and Donald Trump declared his candidacy for the US Presidency (6/16/15). Let's learn a little more about these surgical colleagues.

**Jessica Anna Cintolo** was born in Boston Massachusetts where she was valedictorian of her high school class. She graduated summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Tufts in 2003 majoring in biology and community health. Jessica was then awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and spent a year in Madrid studying Spain's national health system, and learning Flamenco dancing. After this she entered medical school at Mt. Sinai in NYC where she was elected to AOA as well as the Golden Humanism Society. Jessica matched for general surgery at HUP in 2008. Her letters of recommendation for residency were exemplary: from Dr. Marin the chair, "I give her my strongest support"; from Dr. Midulla, "extraordinary candidate"; from Dr. Divino, "outstanding, clearly top 10%". Her Dean's letter was unusually strong, describing her extensive community service and volunteer work and ranking her as "outstanding". So as expected Jessica excelled as a surgical resident at HUP. She perennially scored above the 90th percentile on the ABSITE, and as a result of her work in Dr. Brian Czerniecki's lab published several first author papers in excellent journals. After finishing at HUP, Jessica returned to Boston for a 2-year fellowship in surgical oncology at BWH/Dana Farber. She is now an assistant professor of surgery at the University of Vermont where she focuses on surgical oncology,



particularly melanoma, breast, and sarcoma.

**Meera Gupta** was born in Newport Beach California where she was valedictorian at Lutheran High School. As a youngster Meera was a competitive (roller) skate dancer, winning national and international awards. She attended college at UCLA, obtaining a B.S. in neuroscience with honors in 2004. She then came to Penn medical school where she did very well indeed, already developing her interest in transplant surgery. Meera's letters of recommendation for surgical residency are enviable. Dr. Kaiser recommended her "with the strongest enthusiasm". Dr. Shaked described her as "outstanding" and Dr. Drebin said she was "a pleasure to work with". In 2008 Meera matched in general surgery at HUP where she continued to do very well. During the usual 2-year "research" hiatus, Meera obtained a Masters in Science in Clinical Epidemiology (MSCE) and a certificate in Healthcare Leadership in Quality. She also managed to first author several papers in excellent peer reviewed journals. To prolong her enjoyable and productive journey at HUP, Meera stayed to do the fellowship in transplantation surgery after finishing her general surgery residency. She is now an assistant professor of surgery in the division of transplantation at the University of Kentucky where she is also the surgical director of the living donor kidney program.



**Sarah Mathew** was born in Baltimore Maryland. In 2004 she graduated magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Dartmouth College with a BA in History. Sarah then obtained her MD from the University of Maryland in 2008 where she was junior AOA and where she served on both the curriculum committee and the admissions committee. Both Dr. Steve Bartlett and Dr. Rich Alexander gave Sarah their "highest possible recommendation" for surgical residency, and the Dean's letter described her as "exceptional"; she received nothing lower than "A" or "honors" in her last 2 years in med school. She was clearly at or near the top of her medical school class. Sarah matched in general surgery at Penn in 2008 and did very well. During her 2-year research experience, she worked on tumor vaccines in Dr. Brian Czerniecki's lab. Clinically Sarah gravitated



## Wall of Fame *(continued from page 7)*

toward trauma and emergency surgery, perhaps because of her exposure to the clinical service at Maryland Shock Trauma. Following her general surgery training, she remained at Penn for a trauma critical care fellowship and is now a clinical assistant professor of surgery in the Penn division of trauma and critical care, based at Reading Hospital.

**Jeremy McGarvey** was born in Chambersburg Pennsylvania and went to high school at Mercersburg Academy where he excelled academically and athletically (track). He went to college at Lehigh where he majored in behavioral neuroscience and belonged to the varsity track team. Jeremy graduated summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa in 2004. During his last year in college, he was employed as an independent consultant in the department of automated technology at Merck.



Jeremy then attended medical school at Pitt where he caught the attention of several outstanding academic surgeons including Drs. Billiar, Luketich, and Peitzman all of whom described him as an “outstanding candidate” for surgical residency. Jeremy matched at HUP for general surgery residency in 2008. Perhaps not surprisingly he was drawn to the Gorman lab where he spent 2 productive years. In 2013 Jeremy won the best manuscript award at the annual meeting of the International Society for Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery, and in 2014 he won the Lillehei Young Investigators Award at the European Association for Cardiothoracic Surgery. Perhaps he preferred to save his best work for the international meetings. Jeremy finished general surgery training and stayed at HUP for the cardiac surgery fellowship. He finished surgical training with numerous first authored papers, including 4 in the Annals of Thoracic Surgery. As a member of the Penn cardiac surgery team, Jeremy is now a clinical assistant professor of surgery at Lancaster General Hospital.

**Eric Kouwei Shang** was born in Edison New Jersey and went to college at Swarthmore where he was an all American swimmer. He graduated in 2004 with a double major in economics and math. Eric then attended University of Maryland medical school where he graduated as a



member of AOA in 2008. While in college and med school Eric worked in multiple labs and by the time he matched at HUP for general surgery in 2008 he had a first author paper in the Annals of Thoracic Surgery, and another paper in the Journal of Neuroscience. Both Drs. Bartlett and Roth supported Eric’s residency application with their “highest recommendation”, and Dr. Jim Gammie said Eric was “one of the best students in the past 5 years”. During residency, Eric perennially scored above the 90th percentile on the ABSITE, and had a productive 2-year lab experience with Dr. Ben Jackson. He also continued his useful hobby of rebuilding his computers for speed and better performance. Eric has multiple first author papers in the Journal of Vascular Surgery (5), Circulation (1) and Annals of Thoracic Surgery (2). Upon completion of the HUP general surgery residency, Eric did his vascular fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic. He practices vascular surgery in Morgantown, West Virginia.

**Jesse Daya Vrecenak** was born in North Brunswick New Jersey, and attended high school in Bryn Mawr Pennsylvania at the Baldwin School. In high school she won a National Merit Scholarship and became very proficient at playing the violin. In 2003 Jesse graduated cum laude from Yale with a B.S. in molecular biophysics and biochemistry. While in college she played violin in the Yale Symphony Orchestra and the Berkeley College Orchestra. After graduation Jesse matriculated at Penn medical school where she was a Strickler Scholar and winner of the Bertha Dagman Berman Award. She was elected to AOA and served as president of the Agnew Society. Jesse’s letters of recommendation for surgical residency were exceptional. Dr. Kaiser began his letter, “Rarely do I get to write a letter about a student as outstanding as this one”. Jesse was described by Dr. Morris as “one of the finest students ever”; by Dr. Ross as “an absolute star”; and by Dr. Flake as “a phenomenal candidate”. Jesse matched at HUP for general surgery residency in 2007, attracted here no doubt in part because of Penn’s close relationship with CHOP; she was strongly motivated toward a career in academic pediatric surgery. During residency Jesse spent 3 years in the Flake lab focusing on in utero gene transfer and cell transplantation, and publishing several first author papers in excellent journals. After finishing general surgery training, she did her pediatric surgery training at CHOP. Jesse is now an assistant professor of surgery at Washington University in pediatric surgery.





# Catching-up with . . . *Dave Stitelman*

Contributed by *Jon Morris*

Dave Stitelman graduated with a B.S. from Tufts University (Suma Cum Laude in Chemistry) in 2000 and would subsequently attend the Perelman School of Medicine from 2000 to 2004. Dr. Stitelman took his General Surgical training at Penn (2004-2011) where he participated as a Research Fellow at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia from 2007-2009. During his time at Penn Surgery, Dave received a number of accolades including the Penn Pearls Resident Teaching Award (2005 and 2010), the Leonard Miller Award for Excellence in Teaching Medical Students (2007 and 2011) and the William Y. Inouye Award for Excellence in teaching medical students in the Surgery Core Curriculum (2009). Following a two-year fellowship in pediatric



Dave in 2011

surgery at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Dave was recruited to the Yale School of Medicine where he serves as an Assistant Professor of Surgery in Pediatric Surgery (2013-present) and Assistant Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Science (2017-present). At Yale, Dr. Stitelman is the Surgical Director of the Yale Fetal Care Center and is well published and funded as a current American Surgical Association Fellowship awardee. Dave has continued his exceptional track record in medical education as the recipient of the Francis Gilman Blake Award (Yale School of Medicine) for Excellence in Medical Student teaching (2017), the Graduation Speaker at the Yale School of Medicine Graduation Dinner (2018) and the C. Elton Cahow Resident Teaching Award from the Yale Department of Surgery (2018).

## A Conversation with Dave

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

- Dave:**
1. *Doctors' Lounge lunches with Drs. Drebin, Fraker, Kucharczuk and Noel Williams where they told the residents secrets to happiness and success.*
  2. *Watching Shamus Carr explain the hierarchy at HUP to a Critical Care attending where Shamus yelled, "It goes God.... Rosato..... me!!!"*
  3. *Summer house at the Jersey Shore during the lab years.*
  4. *The night Ben Herdrich came to the city for a night out, volunteered to buy the first round of drinks and returned to the table with a tray of Cosmos, explaining "this is what they drink in that Sex and the City show..."*

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

- Dave:**
- *Alan Flake has been a clinical and research mentor from medical school to today.*
  - *Jeff Drebin and Ali Naji as surgeon-scientist role models—I think about their devotion to patients, research and trainees every day.*
  - *Jon Morris—The hardest working man in show business. He brings so much soul and fun to the job.*
  - *Alan Schuricht and Ken Murayama—Two of the best laparoscopic teachers and educators on the planet.*
  - *Matt Kirkland for teaching me to operate using "feel" and Steve Raper for teaching me how to expose.*
  - *Pat Reilly, Pat Kim and Ben Braslow taught me how to execute care in a trauma bay, ICU and hospital at large.*

- *Paul Dabrowski was the clerkship director at Penn when I was a medical student and I try to emulate that persona as a clerkship director now.*

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

- Dave:**
- *Bob Canter taught me organization as an intern.*
  - *Mark Berry called me a good soldier in my first rotation and I have tried to be a good soldier from that day forward.*
  - *Dave Yan and Lee Goldstein were my chiefs for most of 3rd year and I still behave like them today.*

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

- Dave:** *Jash Datta—The guy knew everything and created a great vibe on service.*

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

- Dave:** *Having friends from med school and residency to hang out anytime.*

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

- Dave:** *Andrew Newman, Demetri Merianos, John Frederick, Ray Fitzpatrick, Anu Sharma, Matt Santore, Rob Lewis, Niamey Wilson and Jesse Vrecenak*

## Catching-up with . . . (continued from page 9)

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

**Dave:** *I'm a pediatric surgeon at Yale Children's Hospital, a clerkship director for the Yale School of Medicine and I get to run a translational fetal therapy lab.*

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

**Dave:** *Since I left Penn, I got married, had 2 kids and bought a dog, a house and a boat. This takes up most of my time outside of work!!!*

**Stitelman Family:  
Heidi (6), Dave, Caitlin and Timmy (4)**



## Catching-up with . . . Seth Force

**Contributed by Jon Morris**

Seth Force graduated from Davidson College with a B.A. in 1989 and matriculated to the Tulane University School of Medicine where he graduated in 1994 with election to the Alpha Omega Alpha National Medical Honor Society and subsequently matched into the PENN General Surgery Program (1994-2001). While at Penn, Dr. Force took two years of research as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the Thoracic Oncology Laboratory under the tutelage of Drs. Larry Kaiser and Steve Albelda. Following his Chief Residency in General Surgery, Seth trained in Thoracic Surgery at the Washington University School of Medicine under the direction



**Seth in 2001**

of Alec Patterson, M.D. from 2001-2003. Dr. Force was recruited directly out of fellowship to the Emory University School of Medicine in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery as Assistant Professor (2003-2009) and rose through the academic ranks to Associate Professor (2009-2015) and is currently the Kamal A. Mansour Professor in Thoracic Surgery and has been Chief of the Division of Thoracic Surgery since 2014. With a research and clinical focus on lung transplantation, Dr. Force has been the Surgical Director of the Adult Lung Transplant Program at Emory University Hospital since 2003.

## A Conversation with Seth

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

**Seth:** *My Penn training was highlighted by the phenomenal breadth and complexity of cases that I was exposed and the outstanding teaching. I feel that my training allowed me to be a competent and confident surgeon. These skills also helped me to be successful in my cardiothoracic training and later in my career as a General Thoracic Surgeon.*

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

**Dave:** *My training was influenced by multiple surgeons. Running Dr. Rosato's service was probably the highlight of most residents'*

*training due to the sheer volume of complex cases and Dr. Rosato's pearls of wisdom. Most of us still hear his voice in our heads as we are operating. Dr. Larry Kaiser was my mentor during my seven years at Penn. From the time in his lab to time spent on his service he sparked my interest in general thoracic surgery and is one of the main reasons why I decided to become a thoracic surgeon. The cardiac surgeons also helped propel me towards my decision to do a cardiothoracic residency. Experiences and conversations that I had with Drs. Acker, Bavaria and Edmunds were incredibly helpful in guiding in my career.*

(continued on page 11)

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

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

**Seth:** *I had many Chief Residents when I was training but the one who stands out the most is Dr. Ron Dematteo. He taught me how to be a good resident, how to run a service, how to operate and how to take care of patients after surgery. Additionally, he instilled in me the importance of staying involved in research.*

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

**Seth:** *I always stressed the importance of hard work in my junior residents and the ones who could combine hard work with outstanding surgical skill I knew would become excellent cardiothoracic surgeons. Residents who particularly stand out in my mind as having these qualities include Drs. Wilson Szeto, Mark Berry, Derek Brinster and Heidi Yeb.*

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

**Seth:** *My greatest professional accomplishments include my promotion to Full Professor, being named the Kamal A. Mansour Professor of Surgery and being appointed as Chief of Thoracic Surgery at Emory University.*

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

**Seth:** *I have a lot of ties to Philadelphia. My father is from Philly and my mother was from Camden and was one of the first females to graduate from Penn Law School. They got married in Philadelphia and their first apartment was off of Rittenhouse square. I met my wife, Dr. Sara Marder, when I was in residency and she was a Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist. We were married in her hometown of Bethlehem when I was at the end of my residency. I will always remember our last apartment which was an awesome place on the parkway overlooking the Schuylkill, art museum and boathouse row.*

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

**Seth:** *Life and work commitments definitely make staying in touch with friends difficult. My closest friends from residency are Drs. Mike Lanuti, Howard Song and Ross Milner. Fortunately I get to see Mike at our national meetings. When I first came to Emory, Ross was a vascular surgeon here and*

*Howard was finishing his cardiothoracic training and we all ended up doing a descending thoracic aortic aneurysm case together. It was pretty special to have three of the graduating Penn Surgery Chiefs from 2001 doing a case together.,*

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

**Seth:** *I recently stepped down as the surgical director of our lung transplant program after 16 years and I now focus on all aspects of general thoracic surgery with a heavy bias toward minimally invasive surgery. The bulk of my practice includes surgery for lung and esophageal cancer and benign foregut surgery.*

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

**Seth:** *My main hobby outside of medicine is running. I have completed four 50 mile ultramarathons in the past four years and continue to try to find trails near my home to run on. My other hobby is traveling with my family. We made a decision five years ago to take our sons on a trip to a different country every summer. Hopefully the pandemic will end soon and we will be able to resume our travels.*

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

**Seth:** *My wife Sara is a High Risk Obstetrician who was on faculty at Penn when we met. We have been married for 21 years and we have two sons, Asher age 17 and Eitan age 16. We also have two Chesapeake Bay Retriever puppies, Rocky and River.*





# 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](http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/surgery/Education/penn_surgery_society.html)**



**Follow Penn Surgery on Twitter @pennsurgery**



**W I N T E R 2 0 2 1**

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

**JoMo:** What is the last book you read that you would recommend and why? (or if you prefer what is the last movie you saw that you would recommend and why?)

**Seth:** *One of the last books that I recently read is Beneath a Scarlet Sky by Mark Sullivan. I would definitely recommend it because it is an almost unbelievable true story about a man in Italy during the WWII Nazi occupation and also because it reveals how the human spirit can triumph over tragedy. One other book that I would recommend is Born to Run by Christopher McDougal. Even if you do not plan on running an ultramarathon or do not even like running, it is a great read.*

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

**Seth:** *I think that the Penn surgical community is one of the strongest ones in the country and Penn continues to develop phenomenal surgeons in all fields of general surgery. When I first came to Emory two of my cardiac surgery partners, Dr. Brad Lesbnowar and Dr. Richard Myung, were also Penn surgery alums.*

### **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