Emory's strong presence at the Annual ACS Meeting

The diversity of Emory Surgery representation at the 95th Annual Clinical Congress of the American College of Surgeons, McCormick Place Convention Center, Chicago, mirrored the meeting’s theme of “The Surgeon as a Role Model.”

Dr. David Feliciano, recipient of numerous teaching awards and holder of various appointments with the ACS spanning 1985 up to the present day, exemplified the theme by the sheer breadth of his schedule. He introduced the Excelsior Surgical Society Edward D. Churchill Lecture; presented “Acute Care Surgery and the General Surgeon” for the Update on the Emerging Specialty of Acute Care Surgery panel session; moderated both the Perioperative Care session of the scientific papers program and the What’s New in General Surgery at the ACS town hall meeting; was a featured host at the Meet the Expert Luncheons; participated in the Resident and Associate Society Symposium debate “Is the Generalist Surgeon Obsolete?”; and presented “Necrotizing Soft Tissue Infections and Abdominal Compartment Syndrome” for the Challenging Surgical Emergencies: What to Do in the Middle of the Night postgraduate course.

Additional faculty made appearances associated with topical issues. The Diagnosis and Emergency Intervention in Sepsis panel session was moderated by Dr. Chris Dente. Dr. Aaron Fink described “Predictors of Comprehension During Surgical Informed Consent”; Dr. Sheryl Gabram presented “Leadership that Gets Results: What is Your Style?”; Dr. David Kooby discussed “Palliation of Advanced
Gastrointestinal Cancer (Pancreatic)” for the Challenging Cases in Surgical Oncology panel session; Dr. Dan Miller presented “Endoscopic Therapy for Barrett’s Esophagus” for the New Techniques in Interventional Esophagoscopy session and co-directed “Cardiothoracic Surgery in the Future: Technology Overview for Residents and Medical Students”; Dr. Jeffrey Nicholas described “The Academic Center Experience” for the Minimizing Risk in Bedside Surgical Procedures panel session; and Dr. Grace Rozycki was co-moderator of the Update on the Emerging Specialty of Acute Care Surgery, during which she presented “The Status of Acute Care Surgery Fellowships.”

For the Surgeons as Effective Communicators: Sharpening Skills for Critical Moments postgraduate course, Dr. Thomas Dodson discussed “Consequences of Ineffective Communication Skills” and led an interactive video and discussion session. For the video-based education sessions, Dr. Mark Wulkan described “Thoracoscopic Atrial Puncture for Intravenous Access in a Hemophiliac Patient” and Dr. Juan Sarmiento presented “Vascular Isolation Techniques During Laparoscopic Right Hepatectomy.” Dr. Barbara Pettitt was the discussant following Dr. Marie Stelzer’s presentation of “The Benefit of a Targeted Intervention to Encourage Female Medical Students to Pursue a Surgical Career” for the surgical forum sessions, and Dr. Wanxing Cui presented “Liposome Reconstituted Thrombomodulin Improves Early Islet Engraftment” for the Immunity, Transplantation and Tissue Engineering section of the forum.

Four of our residents also contributed. Dr. Carrie Kai-Cheng Chu presented “Preoperative Diabetes Mellitus is Independently Associated With Pancreatic Fistula Formation Following Resection of Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma” and “Portal Vein Reconstruction with Interposition GORE-TEX Graft in Pancreaticoduodenectomy: A Three-Institution Experience”; Dr. Alexa Turner presented “A Novel Calcineurin Inhibitor and Sirolimus-Free Anti-LFA-1-Based Therapy Enhances Allogeneic Islet Survival and Function in Nonhuman Primates”; and Dr. Colin Brady described his work involving the role of Resolvin D1 (RvD1), a docosahexaenoic acid-derived lipid mediator generated during the resolution of inflammation, and its ability to attenuate neointimal hyperplasia and the inflammatory cascade associated with vascular remodeling following vascular wall insult in a mouse model. Dr. Patrick Sullivan participated in an ACS Division of Education steering committee focused on defining the most beneficial surgical skills and clinical knowledge for fourth year medical students entering general surgery internship.

OF NOTE

Dr. McGinnis appointed President of the ACS

Dr. Lamar McGinnis’ association with Emory Surgery and his fellowship in the American College of Surgeons both began in 1962. Becoming a perennial and highly regarded figure at Emory, he was appointed to Clinical Professor in 1994. His ACS activities have been equally influential and durable, culminating in his official assumption of the role of President of the ACS at October’s Clinical Congress.

In addition to his 40 years as medical director of the Eberhart Cancer Center at DeKalb Medical and ongoing tenure as senior medical advisor to the American Cancer Society, Dr. McGinnis’ illustrious career has been national in scope, especially with the ACS. He served on the College’s Board of Directors in 2005-2006 and then was elected as the College’s immediate past president in 2006-2007.

Dr. McGinnis delivers his presidential address
Governors (1985-1991), chaired the Governors’ Committees on Chapter Activities (1988-1989) and Surgical Practice in Hospitals (1989-1991), and sat on its Nominating Committee (1990). He was an ACS delegate to the American Medical Association (1994 to 2000); served as a member (1980-1990), Vice-Chair (1985-1986), and Executive Committee Chair (1985-1986) of the Commission on Cancer; was Second Vice-President of the College (2000 to 2001); and has been Vice-Chair of the College’s Health Policy Steering Committee since 2001. He was President of the College’s Georgia Chapter from 1986 to 1987 and served on its Board of Directors from 1987 to 2003. He is a Life Member of the Fellows Leadership Society and was awarded the ACS Distinguished Service Award in 1998, the College’s highest honor.

Dr. McGinnis has also been an active leader and member of other national surgical and medical organizations. He has chaired many committees of the American Cancer Society, served as the organization’s Vice-President (1993-1994) and President (1994-1995), and has been a consultant in research and cancer control for the society since 1997. Additionally, he was a member of the board of directors of the AMA Surgical Caucus (1995-2006) and also served as its secretary and treasurer. In 2005, he was appointed one of the American College of Surgeons’ three commissioners to The Joint Commission, and now serves on its Executive Committee and chairs the Governance Committee. He is also Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee of Joint Commission Resources.

"At the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Georgia Chapter of the ACS," says Dr. Chris Larsen, "Lamar described and interpreted ACS positions on health care reform, obviously a hot-button topic in our times. He was eloquent, thoughtful, and convincing, confirming my belief that he will be a commanding and compassionate representative of the ideal clinician surgeon." During his presidential address at the Chicago meeting, Dr. McGinnis spoke about the importance of building on the College’s historical achievements to "face a century of change like no other."

**OF NOTE**

**OMFS alumni receive awards**

Four alumni of the Division of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery were presented with awards by outgoing president Dr. Lynn White, himself an Emory OMFS alum, at October’s 91st Annual Meeting of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial (AAOMS) Surgeons in Toronto. "I don't recall ever seeing that many graduates of one program among the awardees in one year," said Dr. Stephen Roser, Chief of Emory OMFS. "It was a testament to the strength of our residents' foundation when they leave Emory."

**Dr. Wayne Tipps** received the Presidential Achievement Award in recognition of important, long-standing contributions by AAOMS fellows and members. As Dr. White stated, “Wayne Tipps is the OMS's OMS. His efforts on behalf of the specialty at the national, regional, state, and local levels reveal his passion for oral and maxillofacial surgery and the patients he treats.” Dr. Tipps established a private practice in Chattanooga, TN, in 1972, and is affiliated with most of the major hospitals in the area.
The Committee Person of the Year was **Dr. Richard Joseph**. In addition to the private practice in Jacksonville, FL, he started after leaving Emory, Dr. Joseph is a Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, University of Florida College of Dentistry at Jacksonville; serves on the faculty of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Shands Hospital, Jacksonville; and is Chief of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Baptist Medical Center, Jacksonville.

**Dr. Robert Hale** accepted the Humanitarian Award for Fellows and Members. Commissioned in the US Army Reserves in 1977, he was called to active duty in 2003, serving in Kuwait and Afghanistan before returning to Los Angeles. Shortly thereafter, he left private practice to serve in the US Army Dental Corps as Commander-Designee of the US Army Dental and Trauma Research Detachment and Craniomaxillofacial Consultant to the Armed Forces Institute of Regenerative Medicine.

**Dr. Deepak Krishnan** received the AAOMS/OMSF Faculty Educator Development Award, which encourages promising young faculty surgeons to continue careers in academia (**Dr. Martin Steed** was a recipient two years ago). Dr. Krishnan is an Assistant Professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. In addition to his clinical work, he is an active researcher who has done studies of the challenges of sedating patients with high BMIs and the potential complications of reconstruction of the temporomandibular joint with a metal condylar protheses.

In addition to these awards, it is worth noting that The AAOMS Political Activist Award, given in recognition of outstanding grassroots support of legislative issues at the state and federal level, was re-named the **John F. Freihaut** Political Activist Award at last year's meeting. Dr. Freihaut, who completed his Emory OMFS residency in 1980, was a long-time member of the organization's Political Action Committee and an advocate of patients' rights in the Georgia and federal legislatures for most of his career until passing away two years ago after a long battle with colon cancer.

**IN THE NEWS**

**Breath test for breast cancer trial and CHOA's 1000th transplant**

**Dr. Sheryl Gabram**'s cooperative investigation with Dr. Charlene Bayer, Georgia Technology Research Institute, of volatile organic compounds in exhaled breath as a potential tool for breast cancer detection and monitoring, received coverage from the AJC, WABE, UPI.com and other media outlets. "The technology of breath analysis
has been around for decades, but the opportunity to develop a small hand-held collection/interpretation device available in physicians’ offices is why we are continuing to move forward with this research for breast and potentially other cancer detection,” says Dr. Gabram.

The Phase 1 study found that 72 percent of the women enrolled who had Stage II, III, or IV breast cancer registered positive on the breath test, while 64 percent of those who did not have breast cancer came up negative. This corresponded to a correct classification rate of approximately 77% for differentiating breast cancer cases from controls. The testing device is a 4-inch Teflon cylinder resembling a Breathalyzer, adapted from a device typically used in Europe to test for occupational exposure to contaminants.

Because of its portability, the device could be used in countries where women may not have easy access to mammography screening, though Dr. Gabram stressed that breath testing ideally is a supplement to and not a replacement for mammography. She hopes this modality can be useful for testing high-risk women more frequently and to keep closer track of cancer survivors for disease recurrence. “Eventually we could perhaps have a direct read system which could indicate if a patient requires further testing to confirm or rule out a cancer diagnosis,” she said.

As reported by HealthNewsDigest.com and other news sources, members of our transplant faculty contributed to the 1,000th solid organ transplant performed at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) on October 7th, making CHOA one of only two hospitals in the Southeast to have achieved this milestone. The specific procedure was a liver transplant. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, only a handful of hospitals nationwide have performed more than 1,000 pediatric transplants since 1988.

“One thousand transplants have changed the lives of so many children and even more families,” says Dr. Stuart Knechtle, Surgical Director of Children’s Liver Transplant Program. “We are proud of our nationally recognized transplant program that has provided this specialty care for infants, children, and young adults from across the country.”

CHOA’s Transplant Program began in 1980 with the inception of its Kidney Transplant Program, which has since performed more than 450 kidney transplants. CHOA’s Heart and Lung Transplant Program began in 1988 and has completed more than 200 heart transplants and four lung transplants. Founded in 1990, CHOA’s Liver Transplant Program has completed more than 300 liver transplants. U.S. News & World Report has recognized CHOA’s transplant services as being among the top pediatric programs in the country.
Recognition and achievements

In addition to increasing the number of approved residents from two to three, the Residency Review Committee of the ACGME has granted continued accreditation of five years to the Emory University School of Medicine/Grady Memorial Hospital Surgical Critical Care Residency Program. Established 34 years ago, the SCC Residency is part of the two-year Trauma/SCC Fellowship, one of the longest standing fellowships of its kind in the country and one of the few SCC residency programs with a 100% first time pass rate on the American Board of Surgery SCC Board examinations. Dr. Grace Rozycki is the fellowship's Program Director and Dr. Christopher Dente is its Associate Program Director.

Dr. S. Scott Davis has been appointed Associate Director of the Emory Endosurgery Fellowship, one of the most coveted fellowships for minimally invasive surgery in the country. Dr. Davis will oversee the day-to-day aspects of the fellows' clinical, academic, and research activities. “Since joining Emory in 2005, Scott has been tireless about education and is a strong advocate of the residents and fellows,” says Dr. Edward Lin, Director of the Endosurgery Unit. Founded on the conviction that laparoscopy would have a major impact on the future of surgery, the Emory Endosurgery Unit was established in 1992 as one of the first programs of its type in the nation.

A RESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE
by Denis A. Foretia, MD, General Surgery, PGY-2

Training leaders in surgery

Over the last decade, the training of surgical residents has undergone a major paradigm shift. The implementation of the 80-hour work week has improved patient care delivery and residents’ personal lives. Yet, within this new environment, a new set of complexities has emerged. Questions about case-load and resident clinical competency have been raised which have contributed to the current work-hours debate.

Meanwhile, Emory Surgery is maintaining its educational mission of training tomorrow’s leaders in medicine and, more specifically, surgery. Considering our distinguished faculty and the continued placement of graduating chief residents in top fellowship programs, this is not particularly novel. What is exciting, however, is that the focus on leadership development in training has received a renewed sense of urgency and support.

In his vision for the department’s ongoing development, our chair Dr. Chris Larsen challenged us to “be ready to strategize, to define solutions and to lead,” a challenge
that obviously includes residents and trainees in addition to faculty and staff. It empowered us to seek diverse ways of making a difference in society, of expanding our niches and fostering growth in our communities.

Emory Surgery's position on the national stage is undeniable. We are now the 5th leading academic department of surgery in NIH funding nationwide. As we continue to excel in academic research, the department is increasing and enhancing the diverse opportunities available to residents. There is ample support, both within and outside the department, to pursue a variety of advanced degrees, be it an MBA, MPH, Masters of Science in Clinical Investigation, or PhD. These options can provide residents with the resources to pursue leadership roles in such fields as health administration, policy initiatives, and international health, naming but a few. Our residents are making the most of these opportunities, such as Dr. Carrie Chu, who has been accepted into the prestigious Master's of Science in Clinical Research program at the Atlanta Clinical and Translational Science Institute; those who have completed such programs as Master's in Ethics; and others that are seeking to pursue MBAs and MPHs.

As the department continues to widen the sphere of influence available to graduating residents, the outcome of increasing numbers of Emory-trained surgeons becoming leading experts in surgery, surgical education, and medicine in general, both within our communities and globally, becomes more certain.

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**MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

**The Residents' Fund**

Contributing to the Emory Surgery Residents' Fund can be an extremely satisfying way to give back to Emory, especially for those who were residents here themselves. A gift of $250 can fund a textbook, while $3000 can provide textbooks for an entire class. Five hundred dollars can pay for a dinner-education session, and $1000 can make it possible for a resident to attend a professional meeting. Every dollar donated to the residents’ fund directly benefits Emory Surgery's 130 residents. To make a gift or learn more about the opportunities for philanthropy, please contact Eileen Murphy at (404) 778-4632 or eileen.murphy@emory.edu.

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**NEW FACULTY**

**Dr. Craig Coopersmith**

(Professor of Surgery, Division of General and GI Surgery, Division of Trauma/Surgical Critical Care) In addition to his joint Emory Surgery appointments, Dr. Craig Coopersmith will be the Associate Director of the Center for Critical Care and will Chair the Emory University Hospital Critical Care Executive Committee. In these capacities, he will work closely with Dr. Timothy Buchman, the founding director of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center's Emory Center for Critical Care (ECCC). The ECCC plans to fundamentally change the critical care process to achieve better patient outcomes at lower costs, initially through linking the interdisciplinary teams who staff Emory’s various ICU's under the ECCC umbrella.
After receiving his MD in 1991 from the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Coopersmith went on to Washington University's Barnes-Jewish Hospital to complete his general surgery residency in 1999 and his surgical critical care fellowship in 2000, after which he joined the faculty there. He worked closely with Dr. Buchman, who had been on the faculty since 1994 and was Chief of Acute and Critical Care Surgery, collaborating on research as well as co-authoring various publications. By the close of his tenure with Washington U., Dr. Coopersmith was a Professor of Surgery, Co-Director of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, Director of the Surgical Critical Care Fellowship, and Director of the General Surgery Resident Research program.

Dr. Coopersmith holds two NIH R01 awards and has research interests in intestinal apoptosis in the development of shock and sepsis, interactions between the intestine and the immune system, and nosocomial infections in the surgical intensive care unit. It is anticipated that he will contribute greatly to launching a new research stream for Emory in acute care, outcomes, and the biology of sepsis and injury.