



SURGERY NEWS ▶

THE MICHAEL E. DeBAKEY DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

2021 ISSUE 1

After 60-Year Career, Dr. Kenneth Mattox Steps Down as Chief at Ben Taub Hospital

Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox, professor of surgery, stepped down this past February from his position as chief of surgery at Ben Taub Hospital. He had served at Baylor and Ben Taub for nearly 60 years, beginning as a medical student in 1960, including the past 30 years as chief of staff. Dr. Mattox's illustrious career included advocating and providing care for Houston's underserved

populations, training thousands of surgeons, and working with presidents and royalty. In 2005, Dr. Mattox led efforts to provide care for over 20,000 people who were evacuated due to Hurricane Katrina.

"It is the 60 years (almost to the day) that I have so much enjoyed — teaching, research, policy, operations, critical care, new approaches, better ways," Dr. Mattox said in a press release. *"I am tremendously proud of the thousands of global and local health leaders we have aided in their training and positioning."* Dr. Mattox's textbook, Trauma, which is now in its 8th edition, is an international bestseller.

During his time at Ben Taub, it is estimated that Dr. Mattox operated or supervised the operations on over 70,000 patients. *"Dr. Mattox's dedication to the college and to Ben Taub Hospital is unparalleled,"* said Dr. Paul Klotman. *"He has mentored the faculty for decades and was a force in the field of trauma surgery."*

"Dr. Mattox plans to continue to serve the Department and Baylor College of Medicine in his roles as Distinguished Service Professor," added department chair Dr. Todd Rosengart. *"I am confident in Dr. Mattox as he transitions to these new positions will continue to serve as an inspiring role model and source of knowledge and experience for our trainees and our faculty."*

"I am tremendously proud of the thousands of global and local health leaders we have aided in their training and positioning."

-Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox

TOP STORIES

Department One Step Away From National Top Spot

The Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery ranked second in the United States for abstracts that were presented at the 16th annual Academic Surgical Congress (ASC), one of the leading forums for presenting surgical research in the U.S. This benchmark represents another step forward for the Department, which ranked third in abstract presentations at the ASC for the past two years. Only the University of Alabama ranked ahead of Baylor, with Michigan and the University of Pittsburgh rounding out the top four spots. Abstracts submitted

to the ASC range from basic/translational research to clinical research or educational research.

The ASC met virtually this year in order to continue providing a rich and diverse environment for the development of academic surgical leaders that met their core values of scholarship, leadership, professional development, mentorship, innovation, community and inclusion. The ASC is to create an environment that is open to listening and discussing the current scientific advances in every division of academic surgery.

INSIDE

- 1 Top Stories
- 3 Clinical Notes
- 5 New Faculty & Staff

- 7 Education Notes
- 11 Research Notes
- 15 In the OR Light

- 18 Leadership Notes
- 19 APP Corner
- 21 Awards and Honors

Department Sweeps 2020 'Top Doctors' List by Houstonia Magazine

The 2020 list of 'Top Doctors' in *Houstonia Magazine* included numerous members of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery, who accounted for the majority of winners in many of the surgical specialty lists. As stated on the *Houstonia* website, the list was compiled and released in partnership with a software and research company, DataJoe Research, which led an online peer-nominating and voting process that also referenced government sources.

Congratulations to the recipients for this outstanding recognition of excellence.

General Surgery

Dr. Christy Y. Chai
Dr. Marcus Hoffman
Dr. Konstantinos Makris
Dr. Claire F. Ozaki
Dr. Bradford G. Scott
Dr. James W. Suliburk
Dr. George Van Buren II
Dr. R. Mario Vera
Dr. Chad Wilson

Colon and Rectal Surgery

Dr. Atif Iqbal

Cardiothoracic Surgery

Dr. Lorraine D. Cornwell
Dr. Joseph S. Coselli
Dr. Ravi K. Ghanta
Dr. Matthew J. Wall Jr.

Vascular Surgery

Dr. Neal R. Barsches
Dr. Panagiotis Koulias
Dr. Brian D. Lepow
Dr. Joseph L. Mills
Dr. Miguel Montero-Baker
Dr. Zachary Pallister
Dr. Jeffrey Alan Ross

Pediatric Surgery

Dr. Mary L. Brandt
Dr. Bindi Naik-Mathuria
Dr. Jed G. Nuchtern
Dr. Jose Ruben Rodriguez
Dr. Sanjeev A. Vasudevan
Dr. Adam M. Vogel

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Dr. Edward Reece
Dr. Sebastian Winocour



Surgery Department Members Shine at Annual BCM Datathon

Members of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery won several "best presentation" awards at Baylor College of Medicine's annual Datathon event, a campus-wide symposium chaired by Baylor President Dr. Paul Klotman and developed to leverage the analysis of clinical "big data" harvested in partnership with our clinical affiliates.

Dr. Christopher Ryan, general surgery resident, and teammates **Dr. Subhasis Chatterjee**, assistant professor of surgery, **Dr. Ravi K. Ghanta**, associate professor of surgery, and **Dr. Todd K. Rosengart**, professor and chair of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery, won the "Most Clinically Innovative Award" for their project titled, "Development of an Early Warning System to Reduce the Risk of Acute Kidney Injury after Cardiac Surgery."

Dr. Raymon Grogan, associate professor and chief of endocrine surgery, and colleague **Dr. Fanny Moron**, professor of radiology, won the "Most Innovative Use of Baylor College of Medicine Data Award" for their proposal titled, "Designing Novel Transoral Thyroidectomy Instruments Based on an Artificial Intelligence Algorithm Trained to Measure Population Level Variation in Neck Anatomy."

The purpose of Baylor's annual Datathon event is to raise awareness about new data sources available from the Baylor College of Medicine Data Warehouse that can be used for research or quality improvement projects.



Lots of Wagging Tails at Department's First Ever Pet Walk

On December 20, 2020, members of the Department gathered downtown at Buffalo Bayou Park for an outdoor event to enjoy each other's company from a socially-distanced six feet away. Pets were not required but many enjoyed bringing their furry friends to this safe and socially distanced gathering.

The event was the first of a series of such events sponsored by our Social Equity Committee to foster team building in the department, and was led by **Dr. R. Mario Vera**, assistant professor of surgery and **Dr. Michele Loor**, assistant professor of surgery and chair of the social equity committee. It was magnificently supported by CME and Events Coordinator **Susan Ressler**, who organized the event replete with specially prepared Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery pet bandanas. **Stay tuned for the date and time of the next one!**

CLINICAL NOTES

Building on Our Clinical Vision: Grand Opening of the C-fAST (Center for Ambulatory Surgery Therapeutics)

The grand opening of the Center for Ambulatory Surgery Therapeutics (C-fAST) at Baylor College of Medicine is fast approaching, with an expected open by April 2021. Building on the successful launch of the vascular Office-Based Endovascular Lab (OBEL) clinic one year ago, C-fAST is being designed to offer our patients convenient access to surgical care in a welcoming and comfortable environment. C-fAST will initially be housed in the same procedure area as the OBEL and will provide service for all eligible patients needing outpatient surgical procedures. The C-fAST team has been working for many months to ensure a

successful launch, using the "blueprint" of our OBEL model. Initial procedures performed by Department of Surgery faculty and surgeons from other departments are anticipated to include routine hand procedures such as "trigger finger" release, radiofrequency thyroid ablations, and soft tissue excisional procedures.



"Our team is highly focused on quality and safety. Performing selected cases in C-fAST allows us to manage the entire patient experience from scheduling, to patient preparation, arrival, as well as the surgical procedure and the recovery room. This is a great opportunity for us to really improve quality and patient satisfaction."

- Dr. William Fisher, professor and department vice-chair for clinical affairs, has been overseeing the clinic's development.

Dr. Raymon Grogan Completes 150 Transoral Thyroidectomy Procedures (TES)

Dr. Raymon Grogan, associate professor and chief of endocrine surgery at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center recently completed a world record 150th Transoral Thyroidectomy (TES) procedure at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center. The transoral thyroidectomy surgery technique which Dr. Grogan helped develop is a novel approach to surgery for both thyroid and parathyroid disease that leaves no visible scar on the neck. Dr. Grogan and his team are currently the only surgeons performing this procedure in Texas and are among a small cadre of institutions that perform it in the U.S. This 150th TES procedure marks a tremendous step forward for thyroid and parathyroid patients who come from all over the world to receive this surgery. As a recognized international expert on the subject, Dr. Grogan has travelled all over the world to teach the operation. *"Our terrific team makes it possible to offer our patients something that very few people in the world have access to at this time,"* said Grogan.



Dr. Grogan has co-authored several national guidelines in endocrine surgery and is a well-respected surgeon nationally and internationally. In addition to having expertise in innovative minimally invasive surgical approaches to thyroid, parathyroid, adrenal, and endocrine pancreas diseases, he is also an expert in traditional surgical approaches and treatments for endocrine diseases. In 2017, Dr. Grogan also began groundbreaking research on the relationship between the human microbiome and thyroid disease through a Paul Lederfo Research Grant from the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons.

Dr. David Wesson Retires after 23 Years of Service



Dr. David E. Wesson stepped down from his position as associate surgeon-in-chief at Texas Children's Hospital and professor in the Division Pediatric Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine on September 30, 2020.

Dr. Wesson served as chief of pediatric surgery at Texas Children's Hospital from 1997-2012. In that position, he brought in several subspecialists to cater to a broader range of patients and conditions. Dr. Wesson led the efforts towards getting Level I accreditation for the Texas Children's Hospital Trauma Center and he helped build other programs, such as the Texas Children's Fetal Center, GI surgery and surgical oncology.

"Dr. Wesson fought hard to have a trauma program and firmly believed it was a service Texas Children's should provide," said Dr. Bindi Naik-Mathuria, medical director of the Trauma Center at Texas Children's Hospital Medical Center Campus. *"Over the past decade, the center has grown tremendously, becoming one of the busiest in Houston and best in the region."*

Dr. Wesson is also known internationally for his early studies on the non-operative treatment of solid organ injuries in children. His research helped

to bring about a new approach to the treatment splenic of trauma without the need for surgery. Wesson received the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma Millennium Commitment Award in 2000 and the Safe Kids Canada Founder Award in 2006. Our department honored Dr. Wesson in 2013 with the Michael E. DeBakey Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding service.

Dr. Wesson has published more than 110 peer-reviewed papers on pediatric trauma and gastrointestinal disorders in medical journals and 33 book chapters. In 2005, he edited a leading textbook, *Pediatric Trauma: Pathophysiology, Diagnosis and Treatment*. As a member of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma, Wesson was a survey team member for Trauma Center designation for many years. He is a founding member of the International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Trauma*.

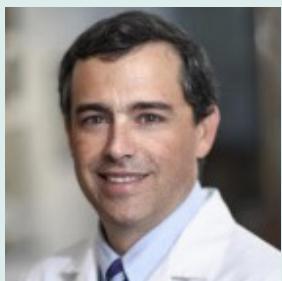
Texas Children's Hospital surgeon in chief Dr. Larry Hollier said Wesson is known for his calm demeanor and that in a clinical setting, he fosters special relationships with patients and families, who trust his vast experience and composed wisdom. In surgical and academic settings, Hollier said Wesson's peaceful nature forges collaboration and collegiality. *"David is a tremendous role model who has led with integrity and grace. We all are better having known him,"* Hollier said.

NEW FACULTY & STAFF

Faculty

Dr. E. Ramsay Camp

Chief, Division of Surgical Oncology



The Department welcomed **Dr. E. Ramsay Camp** as professor and chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology, and the newest holder of the Olga Keith Wiess Endowed Chair in Surgery. Dr. Camp received his B.S. from Davidson College and M.D. from Medical University of South Carolina. He completed his general surgery residency at Shand's Hospital at the University of Florida and a surgical oncology fellowship at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center. Prior to joining us here at Baylor, Dr. Camp spent 12 years at the Medical University of South Carolina, where he most recently served as chair of their Commission on Cancer Committee and medical director of their gastrointestinal oncology program.

Camp specializes in complex gastrointestinal tumors, including pancreatic and gastric malignancies as well as sarcoma and melanoma. He is a VA Merit Award recipient for his work on studying chemotherapy and radiation resistance in pancreatic and colorectal cancer. Dr. Camp about his arrival at Baylor College of Medicine said, *“Working with our gifted clinicians and researchers, my goal is to continue the tradition of combining innovative strategies with patient-centered approaches to improve cancer care.”*

Dr. Camp is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and member of numerous professional organizations including the American Surgical Association, Southern Surgical Association, Society of Clinical Surgery, Society of Surgical Oncology, Society of University Surgeons, American Society of Clinical Oncology and the American Association of Cancer Research.

Dr. Jessie Z. Yu

Division of Adult Plastic Surgery



Dr. Jessie Z. Yu joined the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery this year as an assistant professor in the Division of Adult Plastic Surgery. While her clinical practice is based at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, she is also seeing patients at each of our adult hospital affiliates, bringing with her advanced training in microsurgery and lymphedema surgery. Dr. Yu received specialized fellowship training as a reconstructive microsurgeon at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, where she focused on patient-tailored, state-of-the-art reconstruction techniques, and at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, where she served a research fellowship with a focus on the development of novel treatments for lymphedema.

Dr. Yu's clinical practice includes a comprehensive spectrum of care ranging from cosmetic to trauma surgical needs. Her areas of clinical focus include the performance of DIEP and PAP free flaps, VSP-planned free flaps, vascularized lymph node transfer, and lymphovenous bypass super microsurgery. Dr. Yu also brings to our institution specialized techniques for lymph node transplants for patients experiencing the challenging problem of lymphedema, which is typically manifest as arm swelling following breast cancer surgery or lower leg swelling in patients with venous disease. She has additional specialized interests in complex free flap reconstruction after breast, head and neck, and orthopedic surgeries.

Dr. Yu completed her plastic surgery residency at the Hansjörg Wyss Department of Plastic Surgery at NYU Langone Health in New York City. She received an undergraduate degree in molecular biology from Princeton University where she graduated with the Sigma Xi Award for Outstanding Thesis. She completed her M.D. at the NYU School of Medicine, where her dedication to excellence in patient care was recognized with the Gold Foundation Humanism Award.

Dr. Natasha Hansraj

Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy



Dr. Natasha Hansraj joined our department as an assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy. Dr. Hansraj graduated from the Aga Khan University in 2007 and completed her general surgery residency at the University of Maryland. She also completed a vascular surgery fellowship here at Baylor College of Medicine under Dr. Joseph Mills, professor and chief of the vascular surgery division. Dr. Hansraj is certified by the American Board of Surgery and will serve as an attending physician at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center.

Dr. Hansraj has extensive experience in an array of endovascular procedures with a focus on aortic aneurysms and limb salvage. She is currently involved in a few key research projects including, “Gender and race disparities in early operations for symptomatic carotid disease in Texas Hospitals.” Along with colleague Dr. Miguel Montero, associate professor of surgery, she co-created the Houston Technical Forum, which brings together different specialties to discuss complex cases in vascular disease.

Dr. Justin Chin-Bong Choi

Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy



Dr. Justin Chin-Bong Choi also joins our department as the newest member of the Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy. Dr. Choi earned his undergraduate degree in Biomedical Engineering with a focus on cell and tissue engineering from The University of Texas at Austin and his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in 2010. He then completed his general surgery residency at Baylor College of Medicine as well as a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. Following that, Dr. Choi completed an addition fellowship in patient quality and safety at the MEDVAMC as chief resident. He then completed a vascular surgery fellowship at MedStar Washington Hospital Center at Georgetown University.

Dr. Choi sees patients at the MEDVAMC and specializes in caring for all aspects of the diagnosis and treatment of vascular diseases, including the endovascular and open surgical treatment of aortic aneurysms and dissection, carotid artery disease, hemodialysis access, venous occlusive disease. His research interests include patient quality and safety and surgical education.

Staff

Amanda May

Director of Marketing and Communications



Ms. Amanda May has joined the Department as our new director of marketing and communications. In this role, Ms. May will serve as coordinator for our department Communications Committee and oversee our marketing and communications efforts for all of our clinical and academic missions. Amanda brings significant marketing savvy to the department, having previously served as marketing brand manager for Landry's, Inc., where she led a team in strategic planning to deliver and execute Landry's marketing programs. Prior to her work with Landry's, Amanda earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the Texas State University.

In addition to her lead role in advancing our marketing and communications efforts, Amanda will provide editorial support to the department's online and printed publications, and work with Scott Holmes, director of digital media, supporting the department's web and social media initiatives.

Martha Jones

Senior Regulatory Affairs Associate



Ms. Martha Jones also recently joined our department as a senior regulatory affairs associate, and will in this role be responsible for oversight of our clinical trials. Ms. Jones joins the Office of Clinical Research with over 30 years' experience in clinical research, with specific previous experience managing clinical trials in cardiology and oncology. In her new role, Martha will ensure that our department's clinical researchers follow and operate in conformity with all outside legal and regulatory requirements, as well as internal policies and bylaws. Ms. Jones will also assist with ensuring our principle investigators and research staff comply with ethical standards by the way of compliance management guidance.

EDUCATION NOTES

Our administrative team has worked together without wavering during these COVID-19 times in support of our surgery trainees. They have during this time worked with our education faculty and leadership to develop a new virtual and hybrid didactic curriculum, conduct scores of candidate interviews and department webinars and virtual presentations, and graduate and credential developed a new curriculum, over 100 residents and fellows in the 12 programs in our department. Said Dr. Bradford Scott, our vice chair for education, *"Our administrative team has delivered a great outcome. I am excited to welcome new members to the expanded leadership of our educational programs, who will help us on our continued journey of excellence."*

Office of Education Pioneers Novel Virtual Resident Interviews in Era of COVID Pandemic

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and following AAMC requirements, our education leadership successfully developed and conducted virtual resident interviews for all of our 2021 resident recruitments. Not only were resident applicants matched up for videoconference interviews with faculty, our applicants were also able to get to meet our residents through "chat room" group meetings and tour our campus and see our program virtually via an online tour composed by our Director of Digital Media Scott Holmes. In total, our Education Office supervised more than 20 interview sessions for over 300 applicants for 2021-2022 year.



New Members of the Education Team

Dr. Cotton Named General Surgery Residency Program Director



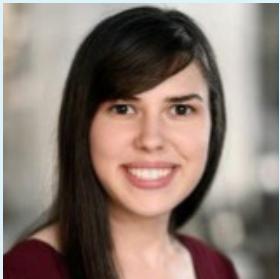
The Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery is pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. Ronald T. Cotton** as the new program director of our General Surgery Residency Program. Dr. Cotton's replaces Dr. Stephanie Gordy, who will be leaving Baylor College of Medicine this year for a new professional opportunity. We would like to thank Dr. Gordy for her outstanding leadership of our program through this challenging pandemic year. Amongst her other contributions, Dr. Gordy helped develop and lead what proved to be an outstanding virtual recruitment program for our general surgery residency applicants.

Dr. Cotton has been an instrumental part of our education team since his joining our faculty in 2015 following the completion of his general surgery residency and liver transplant surgery fellowship at Baylor. He currently leads our abdominal transplant program at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center. A native Houstonian, Dr. Cotton offers our program the unique perspective of a former trainee who has also matriculated through the DeBakey High School for Health Professions, the University of Houston, and Baylor College of Medicine. Since joining our faculty, Dr. Cotton has served in various educational leadership roles, most recently as the core clerkship director leading and helping to advance the educational experience of our medical students.

New Members of the Education Team *continued*

New Education Office Staff

Our Office of Education continues its expansion and path to excellence in trainee education through the addition of several accomplished new members to complement its already exceptional team.



Maelene Phillips joined us as a senior coordinator overseeing the surgical critical care residency program, vascular surgery residency programs, and the pediatric surgery residency program. Maelene graduated from Texas A&M University with her Bachelor of Science in Community Health. Since graduation, Maelene has developed a widespread experience in graduate medical education through her work with the Department of Pediatrics and Department of Neurology, and the Graduate Medical Education Office at Baylor College of Medicine, and through an internship at the Houston Methodist Hospital Education Department.

Sabrina Bernhard joined our department as a senior coordinator working with graduate medical education lead coordinator Jaye Chambers in support of our general surgery residency program and coordinating our global surgery track, sub-I/electives, and the debakey summer surgery program. Sabrina graduated from The University of Texas at Austin, double majoring in international relations-global studies and french. With her background in the international realm, her experience will serve as a great asset to the global surgery track of our general surgery residency program, highlighting her particular connection for the Geneva, Switzerland WHO program.

“ I am so excited and feel so fortunate to be part of the Baylor Family. The Surgery Education Team is comprised of hardworking and dedicated individuals and I am so happy that I get to work with them every day. ”



Morgan Fields joined our department as senior coordinator providing administrative oversight to our plastic surgery residency program, pediatric plastic surgery fellowship program, and its UME plastics electives. Morgan is a graduate from The University of Texas at San Antonio with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health, Concentration in Epidemiology and Disease Control. Morgan brings a wealth of experience in graduate medical education via her recent role as the Graduate Medical Education Administrative Assistant at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center. Morgan has been instrumental in helping to assure that our plastic surgery educational program maintain compliance with LCME and ACGME standards.

In addition to our new recruits, **Ms. Amy Silva**, coordinator for our 13-trainee thoracic surgery residency program (one of the largest in the U.S.), has expanded her role to provide new support for the Texas Medical Board approved cardiac fellowship programs, with five trainee slots, and our new, six-year Thoracic Surgery Integrated Residency Program.

Holly Shilstone, Director of Surgery Education and Alumni Affairs said, *“It has been a pleasure to recruit and mentor this amazing administrative team as we continue to build in a “Team of Teams” culture and strive to achieve a high level of administrative delivery in collaboration and support of our education, faculty leadership and trainees.”*

Finally, we are pleased to announce the promotion of **Ms. Jaye Chambers** as supervisor of our General Surgery Residency and Graduate Medical Education Programs. One of the largest graduate medical education programs in the nation. Ms. Chambers commitment to our education mission is reflected in the warm regard in which she is held by her colleagues and peers, and the gratitude of the many trainees she has helped guide through their years with our department.

Advances in Critical Care Conference focused on COVID related topics

Building on the success of the inaugural 2019 Advances in Critical Care Conference, this year's critical care conference was the first virtual conference sponsored by the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery. Hosted on October 15-16, 2020, it proved that virtual works, and the conference was a resounding success, more than doubling registrants to nearly 300 this year who joined the meeting from 7 different countries across four different continents, compared to 140 participants last year. Conference chair **Dr. Subhasis Chatterjee**, assistant professor of cardiothoracic surgery, labeled it "well beyond best expectations."



The conference provided an opportunity for participants to connect with colleagues, network and collaborate with critical care experts around the country, and explore state-of-the-art tools, technologies, and care pathways. Over 60 speakers and moderators representing 23 different US institutions discussed multiple aspects of COVID-19, sepsis, shock, trauma, and other topics across the entire spectrum of critical care.

"We look forward to another engaging meeting in October of 2021 to maintain our educational leadership at the TMC and regionally," said Chatterjee. He noted the invaluable support and dedication of the entire administrative staff, especially Susan Ressler and Scott Holmes.

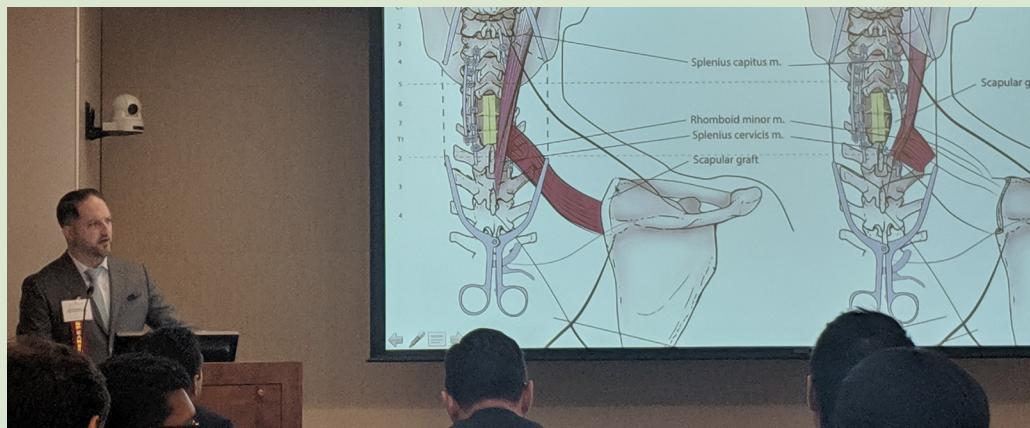
2nd Annual Spino-Plastic Reconstruction Conference

Our second annual, 2020 Spino-Plastics Reconstruction Conference proved to be another success, providing discussion between plastic surgeons and spine surgeons to improve the needs of patients. Co-chaired by **Dr. Edward Reece**, professor and chief of the Division of Adult Plastic Surgery, **Dr. Alexander Ropper**, associate professor and Director of spinal neurosurgery, and **Dr. Sebastian Winocour**, associate professor of surgery, proved to be another success, the program advanced new techniques and strategies for treating patients with spinal disease.

The CME accredited event was held virtually at Baylor College of Medicine on the McNair Campus on November 7, 2020. Those in attendance ranged from surgeons, fellows, residents, physician assistants, nurses, and nurse practitioners specializing in surgery, orthopedics, neurosurgery, and plastic surgery.

Throughout the conference, the course chairs promoted the latest knowledge, techniques, research, and education, which empowered attendees to bring back this information to their practices and academic departments. Attendees were able to see advances in pedicled bone grafting, free tissue transfer, allograft and autograft arthrodesis, and newer spino-plastic frontiers.

Dr. Alfred Sutrisno Sim, professor at Tarumanagara University, keynote speaker, presented among



several other speakers, Dr. Edward Reece spoke on “How I Do It – Combined Occipital and Scapular,” while Dr. Scott L. Hansen, professor and Chief of hand and microvascular surgery at the University of California San Francisco Benioff Children’s Hospital and UCSF Medical Center discussed, “The Evolution of the Spine Surgeon/Plastic Surgeon Partnership.”

The Third Annual Spino-Plastics Reconstruction Conference will be held virtually on August 7, 2021, at Baylor College of Medicine on the McNair Campus.

A Virtual Success! 2nd Annual Advanced Lung Disease: Novel Therapies and Controversies Conference

The Department hosted an international experience in the field, a very successful second annual Advanced Lung Disease: Novel Therapies and Controversies Conference on Dec. 5-6, 2020. Held virtually, the meeting provided engaging state-of-the-art multidisciplinary lectures focused on the causes, diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases affecting the lungs, and was attended online by over 200 participants, interacting with a distinguished faculty of experts in the field.

“This marks an important milestone in Baylor College of Medicine’s Lung Institute initiative to improve recognition of advanced lung disease and the most current and innovative therapies available,” stated **Dr. Gabriel Loor**, associate

professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Transplantation and Circulatory Support. “This conference would not have been possible without the vision and enthusiasm that Dr. David Sugarbaker provided with its inception in 2018.”

Dr. Bartley Griffith, professor of surgery at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, presented the David J. Sugarbaker Keynote Address during the conference, providing up-to-date developments in the field of portable artificial lung technology. Dr. Joan E. Nichols, professor of Internal Medicine, and Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, presented the keynote surgical address on innovations in the field of biological artificial lung technology.



RESEARCH NOTES

Drs. Cornwell and Kheradmand Receive \$4.4M Grant for Lung Cancer Research

Dr. Lorraine Cornwell, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and **Dr. Farrah Kheradmand**, professor of pulmonary medicine, have received a grant of \$4,455,000 (over 5 years) from the Lung Precision Oncology Program (LPOP). LPOP is a part of the Veteran's Health Administration's goal to transform itself into a system of Excellence for Precision Oncology which launched in 2021.

Dr. Cornwell specializes in surgical care for thoracic oncology patients, including those with lung cancer, esophageal cancer, thymoma, and other rare cancers, such as mediastinal tumors and mesothelioma. Dr. Kheradmand is a physician scientist who specializes in studying the role of immune systems in models of lung diseases, including emphysema and lung cancer.



Dr. Lorraine Cornwell



Dr. Farrah Kheradmand

Dr. Bryan Burt Receives Prestigious R-37 NIH Grant for Mesothelioma Research

Dr. Bryan Burt, associate professor and chief of the Division of General Thoracic Surgery, has been awarded an NIH grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) totaling over \$2.5M over its initial 5-year funding segment for his project titled, "Proteomic Determinants of Response to Checkpoint Blockade in Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma."

Dr. Burt's R01 application received a score within the NCI pay line for experienced investigators and was thus converted to an R37 MERIT award, which provides long-term grant support to Early Stage Investigators. Dr. Burt will receive an initial award of up to five years and an opportunity for an extension of up to two additional years, based on an expedited NCI review of the accomplishments during the initial funding segment. The study is expected to be conducted over the period of the 2021-2028.



Dr. William Fisher Leads Study on Microbiome's Relationship to Pancreatic Cancer

This article by Dipali Pathak appeared on Baylor College of Medicine news, January 5, 2021



A \$2.4 million, five-year grant renewal of the Consortium for the Study of Chronic Pancreatitis, Diabetes and Pancreatic Cancer from the National Institutes of Health and National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases will enable researchers at Baylor College of Medicine to study the role the microbiome could play in diagnosing these diseases at an earlier stage.

The Consortium includes 11 sites across the country that are focusing on several large cohort studies. One of these studies tracks individuals over the age of 50 with new onset diabetes, a patient population with an increased risk of developing pancreatic cancer.

Researchers in the Consortium hope to use data and biosamples from the cohort studies to help diagnose pancreatic cancer at an earlier stage, allowing patients to have a better prognosis compared to late-stage diagnosis.

Research has shown that the microbiome can play a role in inflammatory diseases, which are known to be precursors of cancer. Baylor researchers will use the data collected from the cohort studies to look at the microbiome of individuals with chronic pancreatitis, diabetes and pancreatic cancer, which could lead to the discovery of biomarkers for early detection, progression of the disease and new treatments.

"My entire career has been focused on pancreatic cancer, but I think this work will be the most significant," said **Dr. William E. Fisher**, principal investigator of the study and professor and vice chair for clinical affairs in the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery at Baylor. *"I am very excited and feel privileged to have the opportunity to contribute to this Consortium of leaders in the field because it is only through large studies and this type of collaboration that truly significant advances can be accomplished."*

Fisher also is a member of the Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. Burt Leads Study to Determine Role of Cyclosporine Treating Hospitalized COVID

This article was written by Dipali Pathak and published on Baylor College of Medicine's Momentum Blog on November 23, 2020

Baylor College of Medicine launched a randomized clinical trial to determine whether the drug cyclosporine is effective in preventing disease progression in pre-ICU hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

For about 40 years, cyclosporine has been used to prevent rejection of solid organ transplants and to treat patients with rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis.

Researchers hope that the drug will help prevent the cytokine storm that patients with COVID-19 experience that causes their health to decline rapidly. Cytokines are small proteins that are important to the body's immune response but can be harmful if large amounts are released at once. Recent in vitro laboratory research has shown that cyclosporine inhibits replication of human coronaviruses, including the coronavirus that is responsible for COVID-19.

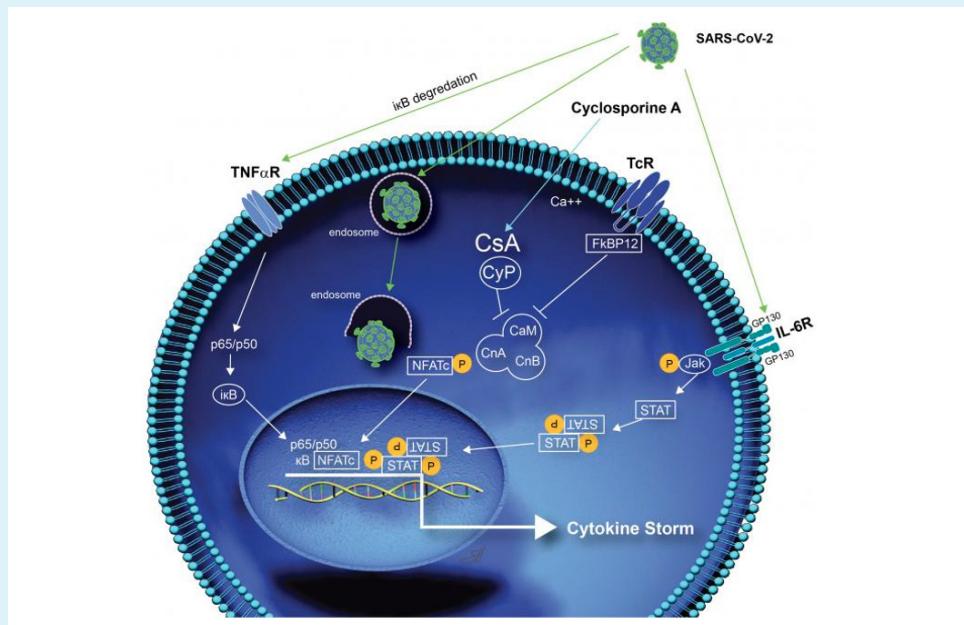
Dr. Bryan Burt, chief of the Division of General Thoracic Surgery, initiated this trial as a

way to contribute during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The rationale is strong because the drug has a good safety profile, is expected to target the body's hyperimmune response to COVID and has been shown to directly inhibit human coronaviruses in the lab," he said.

Baylor College of Medicine is the primary site for the study, and Brigham and Women's also is a trial site.

Dr. Burt hopes to enroll 75 hospitalized COVID-19 patients at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center who are not in the ICU. Patients enrolled in the trial will either receive cyclosporine along with the standard-of-care therapies for COVID-19, which can include Remdesivir, steroids and convalescent plasma, or they will receive just the standard of care. There will be an initial evaluation at six months, but Burt expects to have the final study results in one year.



The study is funded by Novartis.

CDC Awards Dr. Bindi Naik-Mathuria Landmark Grant for Firearms Research

The following article, by Dipali Pathak, appeared on Baylor College of Medicine news, September 29, 2020

Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital have received a two-year, \$700,000 grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the epidemiology of firearm injuries and deaths and identify trends and risk factors to aid in the development of future prevention efforts.

The grant will allow researchers to review three years of retrospective data on children and adults who were injured or killed by firearms in Harris County. This data will allow them to examine the scope of firearm violence and define risk factors to target future intervention efforts.

"This type of research is important because if we are able to identify which subpopulations are affected, what the context of the incident was and where it occurred, we can develop strategic



"By understanding the risk factors related to firearm injuries for both adults and children, I hope that this research will inform meaningful interventions to prevent future injuries and decrease firearm violence, not just in Harris County, but at the national level."

-Dr. Naik-Mathuria

interventions for decreasing firearms violence at the local level," said **Dr. Bindi Naik-Mathuria**, associate professor in the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery at Baylor and a member of the Department of Surgery at Texas Children's Hospital.

Dr. Naik-Mathuria, who will lead the research, and colleagues will develop an integrated database that includes fatal and non-fatal firearm injuries from the level 1 trauma centers, the medical examiner's office and police records in Harris County in order to study personal, social, socioeconomic and environmental variables related to the victims. Currently available national data includes only fatal firearm injuries, and risk factors for non-fatal injuries, which are much more common, are largely unknown.

The comprehensive database will categorize geographic, demographic, temporal, social and socioeconomic risk factors involved in firearm injuries and deaths.

"By understanding the risk factors related to firearm injuries for both adults and children, I hope that this research will inform meaningful interventions to prevent future injuries and decrease firearm violence, not just in Harris County, but at the national level," said Dr. Naik-Mathuria, who serves as trauma medical director at Texas Children's Hospital and is a member of Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's Commission Against Gun Violence.

Baylor College of Medicine recently released a position statement in support of a public health approach to instituting standards for firearm safety.

Dr. Najafi Leads Study on Second Test to Predict Risk of Major Adverse Events After Surgery

This is an article by Dipali Pathak that appeared on Baylor College of Medicine news, November 25, 2020



Frailty is a good indicator for which surgery patients may develop adverse outcomes following their procedure, but current frailty screenings are underutilized. Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine and University of Southern California found that a 20-second repetitive elbow flexion-extension test is a feasible tool in evaluating the risk of major adverse outcomes following vascular surgery procedures. Their research was recently published in *JAMA Network Open*.

“Frailty is a good indicator of who may develop more complicated outcomes following surgery,” said Dr. Bijan Najafi, professor of surgery and director of clinical research in the Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy and first author of the study. “Few people are utilizing current frailty screenings, which often involve analyzing a patient’s gait, because it’s not necessarily a good indicator of frailty. For example, people with an amputation, an ulcer, or foot pain at rest may not walk well, but it doesn’t necessarily mean they are frail. However,

these are the patients who may get the most benefit from vascular surgery with low risk of adverse events,” said Najafi, who is also a biomedical engineer and director of the Interdisciplinary Consortium on Advanced Motion Performance (iCAMP) in the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery.

The 20-second test measures frailty using a sensor worn on the wrist that quantifies weakness, slowness, rigidity and exhaustion. Using a sophisticated algorithm, researchers developed a frailty index ranging from zero to one, with higher values indicating a progressively greater severity of physical frailty.

Researchers found that baseline demographic information and clinical information were not good predictors of adverse events, but those who were identified as frail using the sensor-based 20-second test were 2.1 times more likely to have an adverse event following surgery. These outcomes were independent of the type of surgery, location of incision or surgery site (Baylor College of Medicine or University of Southern California).

“As a surgeon who deals with limb salvage on a daily basis, having such a simple tool help predict outcomes is of essence. I would envision that this could help put together prehabilitation plans for elective high-risk patients.”

-Dr. Miguel Montero-Baker, study co-author and associate professor of surgery, Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy

According to Najafi, a biomedical engineer and director of the Interdisciplinary Consortium on Advanced Motion Performance (iCAMP) at Baylor, this type of collaboration between surgeons and engineers can help better inform surgeons and patients and their families about the risk of adverse events so that they can take measures to reduce the risk of adverse events ahead of surgery.

Partial support was provided by the National Institute on Aging (award No., 3SB1AG032748-06S1; prime awardee, Biosensics LLC, with sub-award to Baylor College of Medicine), the National Cancer Institute (award No., 1R21CA190933-01A1), and Baylor College of Medicine, Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery.

In the OR Light

Faculty: Dr. Yesenia Rojas Khalil

*Assistant Professor of Surgery
Section of Colorectal Surgery*



Q. Where are you from?

A. I am a born and raised Texan, born in Houston. My parent immigrated from Mexico shortly after they married.

Q. What made you decide to go into medicine?

A. I am the first in my family to attend college and the first doctor. I absolutely loved science and for the longest time I thought I would become a science teacher. In high school, I took an Anatomy and Physiology course taught by a retired nurse. One day she asked me if I would like to be a doctor one day. I had never thought about it before until she planted that idea in my head. I was very naïve about the whole process, but she thought I could do it and I just held on to that goal.

Q. Where did you go to medical school and do your training?

A. I went to the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, Tx

Q. What made you choose your specialty? How did you get into your specialty? What do you like most about it?

A. I always thought I wanted to be an OB/GYN but absolutely hated the rotation. I remember my first day on general surgery consisted of rounds, OR and trauma call. It was the most gratifying and fun day that I had experienced my clinical year. I was hooked. When my rotation concluded, I missed being on the service and that's how I knew.



Q. What is your current position?

A. I am an assistant professor of surgery in colorectal surgery and surgical critical care.

Q. What do you like most about being a surgeon?

A. The instant gratification from being able to physically fix an ailment (rid a patient of cancer, e.g.) and/or improve their quality of life. It is a special relationship we have with our patients- the patient-surgeon relationship is based on a deep trust from the patient that we have the skills to make decisions that is in their best interest when they are the most vulnerable.

Q. Is there anything you would tell someone thinking about getting into your profession?

A. There are bad days/issues or situations in every specialty but really enjoying what you do helps you get thru these days. As a colorectal surgeon, there are many very personal intimate issues that am able to help patients with. It is a field with a lot of history, diverse and a lot of opportunity. We are trained to operate in the most maximally invasive cases (for example pelvic exenteration for recurrent rectal cancer) to minimally invasive surgery which includes robotic and endoscopic surgery.



In the OR Light



Trainee: Dr. Youmna Sharif

General Surgery Resident in Global Surgery

Q. Where are you from?

A. I was born in Washington DC and raised by my Egyptian parents in northern Virginia

Q. What made you decide to go into medicine?

A. I attended college at Duke University where I designed my own major that explored the biopsychosocial mechanisms that contribute to the development of disease. When I entered college, I planned on working in the public policy with a specific focus on the public health sector. My coursework included multiple service-learning courses, where I was introduced to the Adopt-A-Grandparent student organization and began volunteering at different nursing homes. This experience helped me realize that I enjoy meaningful interactions with patients and direct patient care, so I applied to medical school during my subsequent research year.

Q. Where did you go to medical school and do your training?

A. After college I spent one year at the Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore working as a medical education researcher. I then completed my medical doctorate at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine in Richmond, Virginia.

Q. What made you choose your specialty? How did you get into your specialty? What do you like most about it?

A. I fell in love with surgery at the end of my third year of medical school when I rotated through the congenital heart surgery rotation. I enjoyed the technical aspects of the operations, the thoughtful approaches to post-operative care, and the clinic follow-up. I emailed the VCU program director the following day informing him of my intentions to apply to general surgery.

Q. What is your current position?

A. I am currently in my fourth year of graduate medical education in the Global Surgery Track at the Baylor College of Medicine Michael E DeBakey Department of Surgery. I have completed one year of global surgery training and I am currently in my third year of general surgery residency.

Q. What do you like most about being a surgical resident?

A. The thing I love most about being part of the global surgery track during general surgery training is the ability to acquire border translatable surgical skills while gaining a broad understanding of surgical disease processes across multiple subspecialties. Moreover, this training program has provided me with the opportunity to explore my interests in the professional development of the global surgeon, the ethics of global surgery, and capacity building in research-limited settings. This has allowed me to pursue clinical and research opportunities in Egypt, Uganda, Prague, Poland, and the Philippines.

Q. Is there anything you would tell someone thinking about getting into your profession?

A. The global surgeon's role extends beyond technical skill to encompass development of surgical infrastructure, adherence to ethical conduct, and performance of responsible research. Ideally, those who train in global surgery become surgeon-advocates who can champion patients, physician-collaborators who can work across borders to facilitate addressing community needs, and practitioner-capacity builders who look towards enhancing surgical infrastructure.



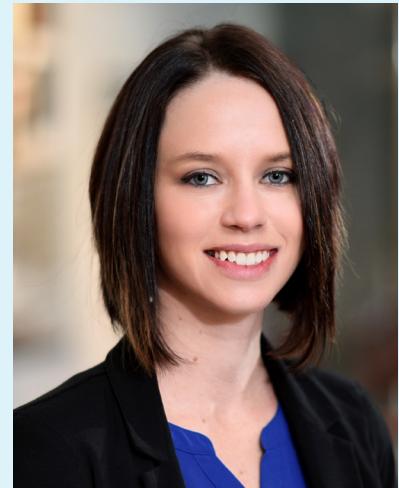
In the OR Light

Staff: Susan Ressler

CME & Events Coordinator

Q. Where are you from?

A. I'm primarily from Ft. Worth, Texas. However, I've lived in eight different cities throughout my life. Originating at the Army base at Ft. Knox, Kentucky to now settling in Houston. Living in the Houston area is the longest I've set down roots of my own.



Q. What made you decide to go into medicine?

A. Growing up I wanted a variety of careers, everything from architecture to marine biology. In high school, I became a student athletic trainer, which sparked my interest in the medical field. The spark grew from there; I worked as an office manager throughout college for a cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon.

Q. Where did you go to school?

A. I went to college at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas where I double majored in Health Science and Nutrition. Last fall, I started a Master's of Science in Healthcare Administration program at Texas Tech University Health Science Center and am expected to graduate this December. I chose TTUHSC for their integration of many health specialties throughout the courses/programs to promote an inter-professional method of care, providing the best experience for the patient.

Q. What made you choose your specialty? How did you get into your specialty? What do you like most about it?

A. Ultimately, I seem to have fallen into the medical field. After college, I worked in marketing and event development for a chiropractic company followed by some time working in the Department of Geriatrics at University of North Texas Health Science Center. When the decision was made to move to Houston, applying to Baylor seemed like the logical next step.

Q. What is your current position?

A. I've worn many hats since joining the Department of Surgery. Currently, I am the Continuing Medical Education and Events Coordinator for Surgery. I coordinate many of our CME programs including our national and international conferences along with smaller meetings such as department Town Halls and our networking collaboration event with Rice Engineering. I also work on various special projects such as our kudos program, which is aimed to promote a culture of appreciating the hard work and determination department faculty and staff.

Q. What do you like most about your job?

A. I love knowing what's coming next but with that dose of unpredictability that only Surgery can provide. The same goes for event planning, there's always a last minute detail needing a creative solution. There's nothing like seeing weeks or months of dedication and work culminate into a successful end product.

Q. Is there anything you would tell someone thinking about getting into your profession?

A. Expect the unexpected. You may start your workday thinking you know how the day will turn out, just be prepared for a curve ball every now and then. It makes for an exciting career that never bores.

LEADERSHIP NOTES

Dr. Mattar to Lead Department Mentorship Efforts



Dr. Samer G. Mattar, professor of surgery and chief of the Division of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, has been appointed to be Mentorship Director for the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery. In this position, Dr. Mattar will guide both faculty and resident mentoring. He will work with the Education Committee, including vice chair for education Dr. Bradford Scott, general surgery, general surgery program director Dr. Ron Cotton and associate program director for clinical and professional development Dr. Eric Silberfein, to help develop mentorship opportunities for our trainees.

Dr. Samer G. Mattar, professor of surgery and chief of the Division of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, has been appointed to be Mentorship Director for the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery. In this position, Dr. Mattar

He will also work with Dr. Michele Loor and Dr. John Goss, leading our Social Equity Committee and our Faculty Appointments and Promotions Committee, respectively, to help develop faculty mentorship programs. Dr. Mattar graduated from Cairo University in 1983 and completed his general surgery residency at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. He completed a second general surgery residency at Vanderbilt University in 2000 and an advanced laparoscopic fellowship at Emory in 2002. From 2014-2017, Dr. Mattar served as Chief of Bariatric Services at Oregon Health and Science University as well as chief of the OHSU Surgical Weight Loss Center. From 2017 to 2020, Dr. Mattar most recently was the medical Medical Director for Weight Loss Services at the Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, WA.

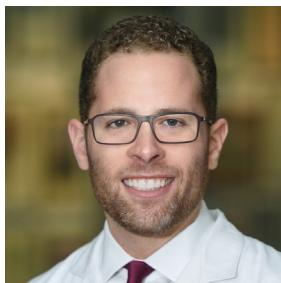
Dr. Galvan Appointed to UNOS Ethics Committee

Dr. Thao N. Galvan, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Abdominal Transplantation, was elected to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) Ethics Committee for a three-year term. The Ethics Committee aims to guide the policies and practices of the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network related to organ donation, procurement, distribution, allocation and transplantation to be consistent with ethical principles.

Dr. Galvan specializes in adult and pediatric liver and kidney transplantations as well as the surgical treatment of portal hypertension. Dr. Galvan has developed an internal swap program enabling kidney recipients to receive living donations through a paired kidney exchange within all three of Baylor's transplant centers. She is lobbying to expand definitions of eligible organ donors to include those who would donate via living donation-prior to planned withdrawal. She is a Health Policy Scholar at the Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy at the College and also holds a 3-year term within the Ethics Committee of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons.



Dr. Lepow Elected to the American Board of Podiatric Medicine Board of Directors



Dr. Brian D. Lepow, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy, has been elected to the board of directors of the American Board of Podiatric Medicine (ABPM). ABPM aims to protect the health and welfare of the public through an ongoing process of evaluation and certification of the competence of podiatrists in the specialty of podiatric orthopedics and primary podiatric medicine.

Dr. Lepow is a board-certified podiatric surgeon specializing in diabetic foot amputation prevention and limb salvage. He holds a dual academic appointment in the departments of internal medicine and cardiovascular surgery at McGovern School of Medicine in Houston. It was during his fellowship that Dr. Lepow became acutely aware of the need for early diagnosis and formation of aggressive treatment plans in diabetics with lower extremity complications.

Dr. Todd K. Rosengart to Chair New ACS Surgeon Scientist Grant Review Committee



Dr. Todd K. Rosengart, professor of surgery and chair of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery, has been named to a new American College of Surgeons (ACS) National Surgeon Scientist Program (NSSP), and asked to

serve as chair of its grant review committee. The NSSP is launching a new \$200,000 surgical oncology young investigator grant aiming to create a premiere developmental program for early investigator surgeon scientists within the United States.

The ACS NSSP plans to initially focus on the development of two early surgeon scientist

investigators annually in cancer-related research, which will serve as a template to expand into other areas of research. Having a focus on cancer-related projects will further allow the ability to focus on comprehensive mentoring available through the National Cancer Institution (NCI). Details regarding the grant program application process are anticipated to be released by the ACS in the very near future.

Dr. Rosengart is an NIH-supported scientist with uninterrupted extramural funding since 1998. An extensively published investigator, he is past chair of the NIH Bioengineering, Technology, and Surgical Sciences (BTSS) study section and a board member of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery and past editor of *Seminars in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*.

APP CORNER

Holly Clayton, PA-C

Division of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery

Lead Advanced Practice Provider

Holly Clayton, has dedicated countless hours and made significant contributions as the clinic lead and chief of the Advanced Practice Providers (APP) Council and lead advanced practice provider for acute care surgery clinics. She, along with two other lead APP's developed the leadership structure for all APP's within the department. Last fall, she was the first APP to share a presentation with the Department at its weekly grand round sessions, speaking on the topic: "Advanced Practice Providers: Advancing Academic Surgical Practice."



Connie Arrington

Division of Cardiothoracic Transplant and Circulatory Support

Connie Arrington is a board certified adult geriatric acute care nurse practitioner with special interests in cardiothoracic transplant and circulatory support. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Texas Women's University in Houston, and then earned her Master of Science in Nursing at University of Texas Health Science Center, Cizik School of Nursing with a focus in adult geriatric acute care. She has a strong background in nursing education, medical device consulting and multimodal cardiovascular mechanical circulatory support.



Marcus Bautista

Division of Cardiothoracic Transplant and Circulatory Support

Marcus Bautista prior to becoming a nurse practitioner worked at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (BSLMC) in the cardiovascular recovery room as a bedside nurse for the preceding 4.5 years. He graduated with his adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioner degree in December 2019. He currently works on the lung transplant service working with Dr. Gabriel Loor and his lung transplant team helping to support the care of the more than 50 patients who undergo lung transplant procedures annually at BSLMC.



Anner Jimenez

Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy

Anner Jimenez has been a nurse practitioner for 3 years and is currently working with Baylor Vascular Medicine. He graduated from Houston Baptist University with a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing. As a nurse, he worked with burn ICU patients at Memorial Hermann and with surgical/trauma ICU patients at Ben Taub Hospital. He received his Masters of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.



Jenny Saberola

Division of Abdominal Transplantation

Jenny Saberola has been a medical ICU nurse at BSLMC and has been taking care of pre and post liver transplant patients for over 12 years. She started her nursing career with an associate's degree in nursing, then proceeded to complete her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing at The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. This is her first advance practice nursing job and she is excited to work with the excellent liver transplant team and to meet patients with liver disease and see their progress outside of the ICU.



Subin Valayil

Division of General Thoracic Surgery

Subin Valayil is a physician assistant specializing in thoracic surgery. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Biology from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Following this he participated in various research projects with experiences in infectious disease at Baylor College of Medicine and in urologic oncology at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. He then earned his Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies at Nova Southeastern University in Jacksonville, Florida.



AWARDS AND HONORS

Dr. Rodrigo Zea Vera Receives President's Award from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons



Dr. Rodrigo Zea Vera, a fourth year general surgery resident, has received The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) President's Award for the best scientific abstract submitted by a resident or young investigator, presented at this year's 57th Annual Meeting of the STS. This award recognizes an outstanding scientific abstract by a lead author who is either a resident or a surgeon 5 years or less in practice.

Dr. Zea Vera graduated from Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia in Peru in 2015. His mentor for this abstract is Dr. Ravi K. Ghanta, associate professor and chief of cardiac surgery at Ben Taub Hospital. Drs. Christopher T. Ryan, Subhasis Chatterjee, Joseph Coselli, Matthew J. Wall, and Todd K. Rosengart are also co-authors.

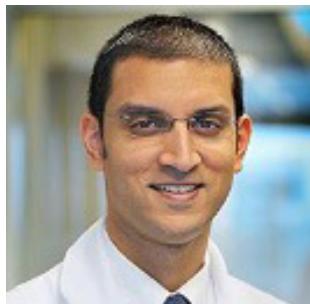
Dr. Abbas Rana Wins Two PEAR Awards

Dr. Abbas Rana, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Abdominal Transplantation, has received two Professional Educator Appreciation and Recognition (PEAR) Awards from Baylor College of Medicine students. The PEAR awards were founded by Baylor students to recognize their instructors and faculty for excellence in teaching, mentorship, and/or for outstanding general assistance and inspiration.

Dr. Rana is an accomplished outcomes researcher with over 100 peer-reviewed articles. He specializes in liver and kidney transplantation as well as surgeries for malignant and non-malignant conditions that affect the liver, gallbladder, and bile ducts.



Dr. Sanjeev Vasudevan Inducted into the Society of University Surgeons



Dr. Sanjeev A. Vasudevan, associate professor in the Division of Pediatric Surgery and attending surgeon for pediatric surgery service at Texas Children's Hospital, has been inducted into the Society of University Surgeons (SUS). The mission of the SUS is supporting and advancing leaders in academic surgery. Members have proven to play crucial roles in all major advancements in modern surgery, from the most basic scientific breakthroughs to the technological advances used at the bedside and in the operating room.

Dr. Vasudevan provides pediatric surgical care with special attention to the surgical needs of children with cancer and the needs of their families. This dedication combines education and training, advanced research, and the development of newer and better treatments and procedures. Dr. Vasudevan's laboratory research focuses on orthotopic modeling of pediatric solid tumors, in particular liver cancer, and personalized, targeted therapies for these devastating diseases in children.

All Female Staffed Cardiac Surgery OR

Reflective of the growing diversity and representation of women in our department and amongst our department and hospital affiliate staff, we're pleased to share this photo of the all-female staffing of one of our open heart surgery cases. Pictured from left to right are: Dr. Ourania Preventza, Dr. Natasha Hansraj, Courtney McCollum CCP, Leni Balogo RN, Ashley Flutey CCP, Judith Muyco RN, and Dr. Alice Le Huu.



Faculty and Trainee Honors and Awards

► **Ethan D'Silva:** Named as a looking to the Future Scholar from the the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS).
Mentor: **Dr. Scott A. LeMaire**

► **Dr. Jeffrey A. Ross:** Appointed to the Advisory Council of the College of Health Sciences at the University of Rhode Island.

► **Dr. Alastair Thompson:** Appointed to serve as Co-Chair of the Breast Oncology Local Disease (BOLD) Task Force of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Breast Cancer Steering Committee for a 3-year period.

► **Dr. Christopher Ryan:** Received a James W. Brooks Resident Scholarship from the Southern Thoracic Surgical Association (STSA). Mentor: **Dr. Todd K. Rosengart**

► **Dr. William T. Cates:** Received a Professional Educator Appreciation and Recognition Award (PEAR) from the Baylor College of Medicine students.

► **Dr. Bryan Burt:** Appointed to the faculty of the Department of Immunology & Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine.

► **Dr. Waleed Ageedi:** Received a Master of Science degree for "Activation of AIM2 Inflammasome Cascade Contributes to Aortic Dissection in a Sporadic Aortic Disease Mouse Model," from Baylor College of Medicine.

► **Dr. Sundeep Keswani:** Appointed to the Board of Governors of the American College of Surgeons.

► **Dr. Hyun-Sung Lee:** Elected to serve as a member of the Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation Science Advisory Board.

► **Dr. Gabriel Loor:** Awarded a \$50,000 Roderick D. Macdonald grant to investigate "Use of Exosomes in Ex-vivo Lung Perfusion (EVLP) to Reduce Ischemia-Reperfusion Injury (IRI) in Lung Transplantation."

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MICHAEL E. DEBAKEY
DEPARTMENT OF
SURGERY