Dr. Cooley Appointed Distinguished Emeritus Professor

On April 1, 2013, Dr. Denton A. Cooley returned to the full time faculty of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery accepting the appointment of Distinguished Emeritus Professor approved by the Board of Trustees of Baylor College of Medicine.

In commenting on this appointment, Dr. Cooley noted, “This gives me much satisfaction after my original nineteen years on the full-time faculty at Baylor.”

Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery Chair Dr. Todd K. Rosengart added that “Dr. Cooley’s many colleagues in the College, the Texas Medical Center, and in the medical and surgical communities look upon his historic contributions with deepest admiration. We are gratified that he has accepted this well-deserved honor in recognition of his great accomplishments.”

Dr. Cooley completed his medical degree in 1944 at Johns Hopkins University and his surgical training at the same school in 1950. It was at Hopkins that he worked with Dr. Alfred Blalock and assisted with the first “Blue Baby” procedures.

In 1951, after a year as senior registrar at Royal Brompton Hospital, London, Dr. Cooley returned to Houston as associate professor of surgery at BCM. This gave him the opportunity to collaborate in the 1950s with Dr. Michael E. DeBakey on the first successful aortic aneurysm repair and begin a period of unparalleled professional productivity and innovation. In 1962, Dr. Cooley founded the Texas Heart Institute where he continues his work.

During the 17th Annual Congress of the Michael E. DeBakey International Surgical Society in 2008, Dr. DeBakey made Dr. Cooley an honorary member of the society. A year earlier, Cooley had inducted DeBakey into the Denton A. Cooley Cardiovascular Surgical Society.

Dr. Cooley is director of the thoracic surgery residency program and along with Associate Director Dr. Joseph S. Coselli and Assistant to the Program Director Dr. Ross Reul, Dr. Cooley trains future surgeons in the three-year program between the Texas Heart Institute and BCM.

Research Day 2013

When science and clinics met

Early on Wednesday June 5, a gathering of nearly 200 white coats, suits, and scrubs assembled in the Denton A. Cooley Auditorium and, anticipating an exciting Research Day 2013, filled every seat available.

This Research Day for the Department of Surgery was called to order at 7:30 am; the morning dedicated to the recognition of the research efforts of the trainees of the Department.

After introductory comments by Dr. Todd K. Rosengart and Dr. Paul E. Klotman, president of Baylor College of Medicine, Dr. Malcolm V. Brock, associate professor of surgery and oncology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, began the morning by giving an inspirational keynote address. He shared some of the fascinating work he has accomplished in lung cancer applying inspired laboratory research to clinical cases. He encouraged the audience to read, write and, above all, to think big outside the box every day.
Chairman’s Message

I am pleased to meet our readership on these papers to help report on our progress and plans for the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery. The past nine months have been busy, with many exciting developments on a number of fronts. I am pleased to share a few of these developments with you.

Our new Division of Surgical Research, led by Dr. Changyi Johnny Chen, will bring together PhDs and dozens of active physician-scientists in the Department to “compare notes”—sharing ideas, benefiting from each other’s knowledge and experience, and lending support in grant and publication efforts. This Division is designed to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive and rapidly advancing research environment. At the same time, the Division will aim to create a critical mass of well recognized researchers with whom other investigators at BCM and elsewhere can readily collaborate.

Our surgical research program, led by our newly appointed Vice Chair for Research Dr. Scott A. LeMaire, will now be aided by a core team of research personnel to support our Department’s research enterprise. This team includes a database manager and dedicated biostatistician, medical editors, clinical trials coordinators, and pre- and post-grants managers. All are available to Department investigators on request through Dr. LeMaire’s office and the Department research committee.

As part of our educational program, the Department this year held its first Critical Appraisal of Surgical Literature (CASL) Conference—a department-wide journal club, and also the department-wide clinical case presentations, complete with literature citations distributed to all members of the Department to inform evidence-based practices. Upcoming events in our new resident-centered training program are: “Surgical Jeopardy,” emphasizing the importance of didactic learning, and surgical skills “Olympics,” to be held in our new Sim Lab now under construction near the Department education offices on the 4th floor of the Jewish Institute for Medical Research. All of these programs are being developed with a new focus to provide our residents with clinical, technical, academic, and lifelong learning skills.

This past May, the Department’s entire faculty gathered in an annual retreat to take stock of our progress to date and to set priorities for our future growth and development (see story below). This June, we held our first department-wide Resident Research Day, a morning long “time out” from our usual clinical activities dedicated to recognizing and highlighting resident research activities (detailed on page 1).

On a personal note, I would like to thank members of the Department and our many other supporters for a wonderful welcome over these past nine months. I am looking forward to sharing much more good news in the time to come.

New Recruits for Education and Faculty Development

Shubha Dathatri, PhD

We are pleased to welcome Assistant Professor Dr. Shubha Dathatri to head up our educational efforts as our new surgical educator. Dr. Dathatri holds a PhD in educational psychology from Stanford University and an MEd in human development and psychology from Harvard University. She comes to the Department from Stony Brook University, where she built a range of expertise in curriculum development, evaluation, and assessment of the surgery resident and medical student training programs in the Department of Surgery, working with Dr. Todd K. Rosengart.

Dr. Dathatri has a particular interest in the design of formative and summative measures of assessment and evaluation that enable both learners and educators to examine learning outcomes in the context of specific instructional activities. She will collaborate with Holly Church Shilstone and with the education faculty leadership to develop rotation-specific, competency-based goals and objectives for our surgical education programs, as well as other exciting new additions to our training curriculum.

Holly Church Shilstone

We are delighted to welcome back Holly Church Shilstone to the Department as a project manager in education, faculty development, and alumni affairs. In this role, Holly will assist Drs. Mary L. Brandt and Shubha Dathatri in overseeing the educational programs of the Department. She will also work with Drs. Charles H. McCollum and George P. Noon on alumni affairs initiatives and in creating our new faculty...
2013 RETREAT

The faculty and staff of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery were all on hand for the 2013 Department Retreat held on April 30 at the Hilton Houston Plaza Medical Center. The retreat began with Dr. David E. Wesson delivering a recap of goals set at the 2011 retreat. Next, Dr. Todd K. Rosengart solicited the faculty’s input in formulating our department vision statement. Retreat participants were then able to vote via hand-held remotes on “Five Burning Questions: Roadblocks and Next Steps” that were anticipated to be challenges facing the Department in the coming year. After the plenary session, the participants broke out into discussion groups to further define the vision of the Department and its direction moving forward.

DEPARTMENT GOALS FOR 2013

1. Develop integrated, multi-disciplinary centers of excellence.
2. Develop support infrastructure for surgical research.
3. Improve patient services, including dedicated, practice-embedded coders/billers.
4. Improve intra-BCM referrals, communications, and appointment setting.
5. Foster specially-trained faculty “educators” amongst department faculty.

ABDOMINAL TRANSPLANTATION

JLH Foundation Chair in Transplant Surgery

The John L. Hern Foundation has made a gift of $2,000,000 to establish the JLH Foundation Chair in Transplant Surgery at Texas Children’s Hospital. This endowed chair, to be held by Dr. John A. Goss, professor of surgery, has been established in memory of John L. Hern, who was hospitalized for 252 days while awaiting a heart transplant.

To help patients such as those he met during this time, Mr. Hern decided to create the JLH Foundation to support the financial needs of transplant patients and their families, to promote the need for organ donation, and to support transplantation programs such as ours.

Dr. Goss is surgical director of Texas Children’s liver transplant program, which is now the largest pediatric liver transplant program in the United States. The clinical outcomes of the Texas Children’s liver transplant program well surpass national standards for patient and graft survival, according to the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients.

SURGICAL ONCOLOGY

Kelsey Research Foundation Lecture

Dr. Eric Silberfein, delivered the 2013 Kelsey Research Foundation Lecture at the Department’s grand rounds on March 27, an event attended by Kelsey Seybold representatives as well as members of the Department of Surgery. The day marked a reinstatement of the named lectures supported by Kelsey Seybold—a long-standing tradition in the Department marked by lectures from national surgical luminaries.

Dr. Silberfein presented his work creating a multi-disciplinary cancer service at Ben Taub Hospital. This 586-bed hospital, which is part of the Harris Health System, is one of the primary teaching hospitals for BCM residents and students.
Dr. Bakaeeen Elected Treasurer for AVAS

Dr. Faisal G. Bakaeeen, was elected treasurer for the Association of VA Surgeons (AVAS) at the 37th Annual Meeting of AVAS that took place in Milwaukee on April 21-23.

Dr. Bakaeeen is chief of cardiac surgery at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) and is associate professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. He joined the Department as faculty in 2004 after completing his thoracic surgery residency here at BCM. He specializes in transcatheter aortic valve replacement therapies and complex coronary, valvular, and aortic operations.

Dr. Bakaeeen’s research efforts include comparing on-vs. off-pump coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) and understanding the impact of age, obesity, and peripheral vascular disease on CABG and valve surgery outcomes. In addition, his team conducts ongoing research on treatment options and outcomes of aortic stenosis and aortic aneurysm. His use of electronic medical records systems and clinical and administrative databases at MEDVAMC has helped facilitate his research efforts.

Discovery Scholars Fund

Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox, chair of The Health Museum Board of Directors for the last three years, was recognized by the board of the Health Museum through the establishment of the Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox Discovery Scholars Fund. This fund provides deserving families scholarships to send their children to Discovery Camps at the Health Museum. The Discovery Camps engage and educate children ages of 5-13 on health, medical science, and the human body during summer and school holidays in Houston. Read Momentum blog.

Research Day (continued from page 1)

Dr. Brock reiterated that finding the right mentor was the key element to student’s success. He compared finding the best mentor to dating. Just as it may take dating several people to find the right person, finding the best mentor-trainee fit might take several attempts.

The event continued with eight remarkable scientific presentations and four poster sessions highlighting state-of-the-art work by selected trainees from several department divisions. During breaks, attendees had the opportunity to socialize, review the 46 poster displays, and ask trainees questions about their work.

A panel of five guest physician-scientists selected the best oral presentation and the best poster presentation among 70 abstracts submitted. The winners received a plaque and a cash award to attend a conference.

Dr. Darrell Wu, research resident of the Division of General Surgery, received the award for best oral presentation: “NLRP3 Inflammasome Cascade Activates MMP-9 and Induces Smooth Muscle Cell Contractile Dysfunction and ECM Destruction in Thoracic Aortic Disease.”

Dr. Irene T. Ma, postdoctoral associate of the Division of Pediatric Surgery, received the award for best poster presentation: “DUSP26 Inhibition: a Potential Therapeutic Pathway in Neuroblastoma.”

The event concluded around noon. Research Day was a positive experience that inspired trainees and mentors alike. The Department is looking forward to repeating the event as an annual undertaking.
The Department fared well at the first annual BCM Cardiovascular Research Institute (CVRI) Symposium this past April 9. Drs. Justin Choi and Darrell Wu received best poster awards by a clinical resident or fellow. Dr. Wu won for his work on the role of the inflammasome cascade in thoracic aortic diseases. Dr. Choi brought home an award for his poster, “Inflammatory Cell Infiltrates after Thoracic Aortic Dissection.”

Dr. Todd K. Rosengart also represented the Department at the event, delivering the distinguished keynote lecture “Cardiac Cellular Reprogramming: In Situ Myocardial Regeneration?”

Founded in 2012, CVRI serves to increase collaborative research efforts, and to develop cutting edge cardiovascular clinical technologies. The CVRI also advances educational programs by expanding training tracks developed for students, residents, fellows, and junior faculty.

The LARIAT® Suture Delivery Device invented by Dr. Cohn allows surgeons to tie off the left atrial appendage (LAA) via a catheter without the need for open-heart surgery. Tying off the LAA is thought to be of value for patients with atrial fibrillation who cannot take blood thinners. The procedure is performed in the cardiology catheterization lab under X-ray guidance and requires no incision. In 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared the LARIAT® for use and it is also approved in Europe.
Surgery Residents Bring Home Awards from 2013 ASC

The 8th Annual Academic Surgical Congress (ASC)—the joint meeting hosted by the Association for Academic Surgery (AAS) and the Society of University Surgeons (SUS)—took place on February 5-7 in New Orleans. With more than 800 research presentations and 1100 attendees, the ASC is the largest multispecialty academic surgery meeting in the world.

Residents, students, and faculty representing six of the divisions of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery combined forces to give 29 presentations at the meeting. Of special note, two of our surgery residents won highly competitive awards for their presentations.

Dr. Linda T. Li won the Best Oral Presentation by a New AAS Member Award for her talk, “Developing a Patient-centered Early Warning System to Prevent Readmission after Colorectal Surgery: A National Consensus Using the Delphi Method.” The award included a cash prize. Dr. Li is in her second research year working in the Division of General Surgery with her mentor, Dr. David H. Berger.

Dr. Darrell Wu also won the SUS Young Investigator Travel Award for his work on the role of inflaminsome in thoracic aortic disease. This award is given to the highest rated plenary presentation at the ASC. As the award recipient, Dr. Wu will represent SUS presenting his work at the 48th Congress of the European Society for Surgical Research in Istanbul. Dr. Wu is mentored by Drs. Scott A. LeMaire and Ying Shen.

Thoracic Surgery Resident Elected Honorary AΩA Member

Dr. Ismael Salas de Armas was one of two residents chosen by the student inductees of the BCM Chapter Alpha Omega Alpha for honorary membership in the chapter. The Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society is a professional medical organization that recognizes and advocates for excellence in the profession of medicine and its ideals. As in this case, a distinguished professional can be elected to honorary membership.

Dr. Salas de Armas graduated from BCM general surgery residency program last year and entered into the 3-year thoracic surgery residency under Drs. Denton A. Cooley and Joseph S. Coselli.

2013 Resident Surgical Jeopardy Bowl

Residents Dr. Hector Saucedo Crespo (PGY-4) and Dr. Sara C. Fallon (research resident) won big at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), South Texas Chapter held in the Texas Medical Center on February 22. They competed in the Resident Surgical Jeopardy Bowl, facing off against nine select teams from other training programs and winning in the finals against the University of Texas, Medical Branch in Galveston and UT Austin with a question about surgical pioneer William Stewart Halsted. The two had amassed such a commanding lead that they had already secured a win before making it into the final Jeopardy round.

Drs. Saucedo Crespo and Fallon will have their expenses paid by ACS South Texas Chapter when they represent our department in the national competition at the ACS Congress in Washington, D.C. against 23 other teams this October.

Surgical Jeopardy, modeled after the popular television show Jeopardy!, includes topics that are covered on surgical board certification exams.

Vascular Surgery Fellow Elected into APDVS

Dr. Jesús M. Matos, a first-year vascular fellow, was elected to the executive council of the Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery (APDVS). He was chosen out of 32 applicants. Dr. Matos joined BCM in July 2012 and has been working closely with Dr. Carlos F. Bechara, director of the BCM vascular surgery fellowship, who endorsed his application.
Dr. Charles H. McCollum, professor of surgery, received a BCM Distinguished Alumnus Award on April 20 at this year’s reunion weekend. The award recognizes BCM’s alumni and faculty for excellence in achievement and service.

Born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, Dr. McCollum stood out early on, achieving the level of Eagle Scout. He attended medical school at the University of Texas, Medical Branch in Galveston and went on to complete his general surgery and thoracic surgery residencies at BCM in 1965 and 1966, respectively.

Dr. McCollum joined the Department as faculty member in 1966 and has served as acting chair of the Department as well as interim chief of both the Division of Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Therapy and the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. Dr. McCollum has received many accolades for his exemplary 23-year service as general surgery program director. His research focuses on non-invasive studies for the diagnosis of peripheral vascular disease using ultrasound technology.

The Department held its first Critical Appraisal of Surgical Literature (CASL) grand rounds as part of our regularly scheduled series of lectures on February 27. The series was developed to provide residents with an introduction to evidence-based decision making in the clinical practice setting. Effective decision making depends on the ability to identify and critically evaluate the medical literature and apply new findings to clinical practice. The Department plans to add CASL to our grand rounds schedule on a quarterly basis as part of our education and clinical improvement program.

During our first meeting, Drs. Sara C. Fallon and Sonia Tewani Orcutt reviewed two articles for the quality level of the evidence as well as the statistical validity, clinical relevance, patient randomization and methodologies. Faculty moderators, Drs. Neal R. Barshes, Mary L. Brandt, Mónica López, and James W. Suliburk, provided an overview of the critical review method and additional discussion of the articles.

BCM’s first laparoscopic skills course for core surgery medical students took place in our Experimental Surgery and Surgical Training Labs on April 5. At the end, the participants held a friendly contest—men vs. women—which resulted in a tie. Drs. Bindi Naik-Mathuria, Ashwin P. Pimpalwar, and Deborah J. Taylor conducted the course.

With a rich history of pioneering advancements in surgery dating back to founder Dr. Michael E. DeBakey, the Experimental Surgery and Surgical Training Laboratories at BCM continue to provide state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for surgical research and education. In part through this skills program, training of the next generation of surgeons and bringing ground-breaking discoveries to the forefront of patient care will maintain its prominent position in the Department.

New Recruits (continued from page 2)

development program, which is directed by Dr. David E. Wesson.

After receiving a BS from The University of Texas at Austin, Holly joined the Department for the first time in 1987 as coordinator for the vascular surgery residency program. She assisted Dr. E. Stanley Crawford, program director for the vascular residency, in obtaining the first Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for that program. She was then asked to take on the role of coordinator for general surgery residency program in 1990, working with Dr. McCollum, who was program director at that time.

The Department centralized its educational programs in 1993 and Holly was promoted to administrator, overseeing all educational programs. Thereafter, she worked as a consultant for the Department, assisting with the Graduate Medical Education Consortium (GMEC) internal reviews and ACGME site visits for various programs.
HONORS & AWARDS

Dr. Mary L. Brandt, professor and vice chair for education, received the 2013 Graduating Class Outstanding Faculty Award.

Dr. Joseph S. Coselli, professor and chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, was elected vice president of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery (AATS). He will assume the role of president of AATS in 2015. Before Dr. Coselli, the only BCM faculty member to be president of the AATS was Dr. Michael E. DeBakey, from 1958-1959.

Dr. Sara C. Fallon, general surgery resident, tied for first place at the 2013 Advancing Clinical Excellence in Health Care Delivery System Poster Session, which took place on June 5 at BCM’s main campus. Dr. Fallon presented, “Evaluating the Efficacy of Protocolized Management in Pediatric Abdominal Trauma.” Her faculty mentor is Dr. Bindi Naik-Mathuria. Dr. Fallon also received the inaugural Samuel Stal Research Award at Texas Children’s Hospital’s Department of Surgery 2013 Edmond T. Gonzales Jr. Surgical Research Day.

Dr. Charles D. Fraser Jr., professor of surgery and pediatrics, and chief of the Division of Congenital Heart Surgery, was named 2013 Distinguished Alumnus Award Honoree by Texas Exes—the University of Texas at Austin’s official alumni association. Dr. Fraser is the Susan V. Clayton chair in surgery at BCM as well as surgeon-in-chief at Texas Children’s Hospital.

Dr. Eugene S. Kim, assistant professor of the Division of Pediatric Surgery, was awarded the Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. Faculty Excellence Award for Teaching & Evaluation.

Dr. Linda T. Li, medical resident, won the Resident Poster Award for Reviews, Meta-analysis and Epidemiology at the American Geriatrics Society Annual Meeting for her work on a patient-centered early warning system. Dr. Li also tied for first place at the 2013 Advancing Clinical Excellence in Health Care Delivery System Poster Session, which took place on June 5 at BCM’s main campus. Dr. Li presented, “LEAN Surgical Discharge Process at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center.” Her faculty mentor is Dr. David H. Berger.

Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox, professor of surgery and chief of staff at Ben Taub Hospital (BTH), has received the BCM Master Clinician Lifetime Award. Dr. Mattox has also been honored with the 2013 Benjamin Rush Award for Citizenship and Community Service. The award, given to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the community, will be presented to him at the interim meeting of the American Medical Association.

Dr. Todd K. Rosengart, chairman of the Department of Surgery, professor, was recently appointed to a four year term on the National Institutes of Health Bioengineering, Biotechnology and Surgical Sciences Study Section. The study section reviews grant applications for the development of innovative medical instruments, materials, processes, and devices to diagnose and treat diseases and injuries. Dr. Rosengart was also recently appointed representative of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery to the Assessment and Accreditation Management System (AAMS) Council of Faculty and Academic Society.

Dr. Eric J. Silberfein, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Surgical Oncology, was selected as Employee of the Quarter at Ben Taub Hospital.

Dr. Nicole M. Tapia, general surgery resident, has received the Excellence in Research Award in the category of quality, outcomes and costs. She will present her abstract, “PACT Project: Standardized Resident Handoff Implementation Improves Handoff Quality,” at the surgical forum program in October.