New Chief of Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Therapy

The Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery is pleased to welcome Dr. Joseph L. Mills Sr. as its new chief of the Division of Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Therapy and director of the Vascular Surgery Residency Program, effective June, 2015. Since 1994, Dr. Mills has served as chief of Vascular Surgery at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson, where he also founded and co-directs the Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA), an internationally acclaimed limb salvage clinical care and research unit. He joins Baylor eager to develop an even larger program in our department.

Among Dr. Mills’ many achievements, he has served as president of the Peripheral Vascular Surgery Society, president of the Western Vascular Society, president of the Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery, director of the American Board of Surgery (ABS), and past chair of the Vascular Surgery Board of the ABS. He is currently a member of the Surgery Residency Review Committee of the ACGME and is co-editor of the prestigious Rutherford’s Vascular Surgery (seventh and eighth editions), the “go-to” textbook for vascular surgery.

Dr. Mills earned his MD degree at Georgetown University School of Medicine and completed his surgical internship and residency at Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center, Lackland AFB, Texas. He trained in vascular surgery at Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland, Oregon.

“It is both an honor and a great privilege to assume a leadership position in the Division of Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Therapy at Baylor College of Medicine. We plan to expand training programs in vascular surgery to include a newer paradigm, taking medical students directly from medical school, the so-called integrated pathway, as well as continue to train traditional pathway residents with us after they have completed general surgical training. Plans for the division are to develop a comprehensive peripheral arterial disease program with a heavy focus on limb salvage in patients with diabetic foot complications and integrate this program throughout the greater Houston area and Baylor’s hospital affiliates, including Baylor St Luke’s Medical Center and Ben Taub Hospital.”

Joseph L. Mills Sr., MD
Professor of Surgery and Chief, Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Therapy
I am pleased to report that our Department has continued its accelerated growth and development in the past year, another exciting chapter in the annals of our history. In this interval, we have appointed 20 new faculty members, and witnessed the expansion of a variety of new programs and initiatives, including our new Division of General Thoracic Surgery under the leadership of Dr. David J. Sugarbaker, and our Division of Surgical Oncology and the Surgical Oncology Clinic at the Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center led by Dr. Steven A. Curley. We also continue to cheer the great successes of many of our existing faculty, including Dr. Joseph S. Coselli assuming the presidency of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery, succeeding Dr. Sugarbaker a year after he too rose to this office.

Among our new faculty, we are pleased to welcome Dr. Joseph L. Mills Sr., professor and chief of Vascular Surgery at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson, as our new chief of the Division of Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Therapy and director of the Vascular Surgery Residency Program. Dr. Mills’ vast expertise in vascular surgery promises to boost our already highly successful vascular surgery programs and practices and further advance our standing in the field. Dr. Mills will build on the tremendous efforts of Dr. Peter H. Lin, outgoing division chief, whom we are pleased to appoint as emeritus professor in the Department. During his tenure, Dr. Lin led the establishment of a new vascular surgery program at Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center and our newly accredited Peripheral Vascular Imaging Lab at Baylor Clinic.

We are also very excited to welcome Dr. S. Rob Todd, who is joining us from New York University School of Medicine as associate professor and director of our Surgical Critical Care Residency Program. Dr. Todd, who is also chief of General Surgery and director of the Ginni and Richard Mithoff Trauma Center at Ben Taub, has already made a tremendous impression on both our surgery and critical care programs overall, establishing a new intensivist program at Ben Taub, and partnering with our outstanding recruit from Washington University, assistant professor Dr. Robert E. Southard, who has led efforts to establish new surgical critical care units at Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center.

Among our many faculty and resident accomplishments detailed below, a singular achievement is that of Dr. Faisal G. Bakaeeen, professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, who has been appointed chair of the Surgical Quality Data Use Group (SQDUG) within the VA National Surgery Office. Dr. Bakaeeen will bring to this position his extensive experience organizing and advancing major thoracic aortic surgery programs at Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, and his experiences in SQDUG will enrich our own research and educational programs.

We also celebrate with Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox his appointment as second vice-president of the American College of Surgeons, and congratulate him for having an ACS International Lectureship and Scholarship Program established in his name. Congratulations also to Dr. Scott A. LeMaire, professor and vice-chair for research, upon his appointment as editor of the prestigious Journal of Surgical Research.

Many of the other new programs and successes of the Department in the past six months are further detailed in this edition of our newsletter. With success comes personal growth, and we also recognize the “bittersweet” departure of colleagues who are moving on to exciting new opportunities in their careers. Dr. Daniel Albo has accepted a position at Georgia Regents University in Augusta, Georgia as director of Surgical Services, Cancer Service Line; director of Colorectal Surgery, Cancer Service Line and Department of Surgery, and director of Health Services Research. We are privileged to have Dr. Avo Artinyan, assistant professor and director of the Baylor College of Medicine Surgical Simulation Center, assuming Dr. Albo’s role in helping to lead our clinical service in the Division of Surgical Oncology as our new section chief of Colorectal Surgery.

We also bid our sincerest best wishes to Dr. Daniel A. Anaya, who has accepted a prestigious new appointment as head of the Hepatobiliary Section in the Department of GI Malignancies at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida, the third largest NCI comprehensive cancer center in the US. While at Baylor, Dr. Anaya served as chief of General Surgery at the MEDVAMC, and was a prolific, highly regarded, extramurally funded researcher at the VA.

Finally, we also bid adieu to George Woodard, Research Tech III in the Experimental Surgery Program, who is retiring after 48 years working alongside Dr. DeBakey and nearly all of the legendary members of our Department as well as innumerable others of our faculty, residents, and students. George played an indispensable role in our experimental surgery lab helping to develop many of the devices and procedures for which our department is renowned. We will miss George dearly, and wish him well as he looks forward to playing golf, but also (hopefully often) coming back to Baylor to visit the Simulation Center he helped launch.

Thank you all and we look forward to another exciting new academic year for the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery!
Dr. Bakaeen, New Chair of VA National Surgical Quality Research Group

Dr. Faisal G. Bakaeen, professor of surgery in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery and chief of cardiothoracic surgery at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC), has been appointed chair of the Surgical Quality Data Use Group (SQDUG) within the Veterans Affairs (VA) National Surgery Office. This highly prestigious role will see Dr. Bakaeen leading national research efforts in conjunction with the internationally acclaimed VA Quality Improvement Program, for which he will also serve as an executive member.

Dr. Bakaeen was appointed to this position upon recommendation of Dr. William Gunnar, national director of Surgery, after serving two years as a committee member of SQDUG and also as a member of the VA Surgical Advisory Board for Cardiac Surgery. Of this appointment, Dr. Bakaeen said, “I am honored to have the opportunity to lead an amazing program that is designed to ensure rigorous surgical research through investigations that would translate into better care for our veterans. I aspire to build on the excellence of this program and boost its productivity and impact.”

Under Dr. Bakaeen’s leadership, MEDVAMC’s cardiac surgery program has grown into the largest and most successful national program in the VA system. The transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) program launched there, one of the few in the entire VA network, was the first to offer both trans-apical and trans-femoral TAVR approaches. As with all categories of cardiac surgery performed there, TAVR outcomes at MEDVAMC are the best in the nation. Dr. Bakaeen and his colleagues Dr. Lorraine D. Cornwall and Dr. Shuaib Omer have likewise launched one of the largest and most successful thoracic aortic surgery programs in the VA system, a program that is recognized as a national referral center within the VA.

Dr. Bakaeen and his team at MEDVAMC are also engaged in a very active clinical research program. Both the use of electronic medical records in the VA system and the access to rigorous clinical and administrative databases have facilitated the team’s research efforts. Studies about on- versus off-pump coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), radial artery grafting, endoscopic versus open vein harvest, antithrombotic therapy, atrial fibrillation, aortic stenosis, aortic aneurysm treatment options and outcomes, and trends in valve surgery are just some of the areas of clinical research carried out at MEDVAMC. Research in surgical education and the effect of resident training on surgical morbidity and mortality are also important components of Dr. Bakaeen’s research portfolio.

NEW VASCULAR CHIEF CONTINUED FROM COVER

Oregon, and completed a senior fellowship in Endovascular Surgery at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center before ultimately joining the University of Arizona, where he rose to the rank of professor of surgery.

Dr. Mills has authored nearly 300 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters focused on his clinical and research interests in noninvasive diagnosis, vein graft stenosis, intimal hyperplasia, and limb-salvage in patients with diabetes mellitus. He has been the principal investigator for over 40 clinical trials, including a number of current investigations, and is widely regarded as an expert in peripheral vascular disease and limb salvage and as a renowned educator in vascular surgery training. He hopes to bring a great portion of this work and his prolific research team to Baylor.

Conjoined twins undergo successful separation at Texas Children’s Hospital

The Department proudly joined the celebration for the successful separation of Knatayle Hope and Adeline Faith Mata, conjoined twin girls born at Texas Children’s Pavilion for Women in April 2014. The surgery, which took place on Feb. 17 at Texas Children’s Hospital, was an extraordinary team effort of 12 Baylor faculty surgeons, six anesthesiologists, and eight surgical nurses who worked for approximately 23 hours on Knatayle and 26 hours on Adeline; the official separation of the twin girls occurred approximately 18 hours into the surgery. The team prepared for this surgery for months by working with our radiology experts to build a 3-D model of the twins’ organs, conducting simulations of the actual separation surgery, and participating in many multidisciplinary conferences.

Knatayle went home by the end of April and Addy followed in June.

CONJOINED TWINS SEPARATION SURGICAL TEAM:
Edward Buchanan, MD - Plastic Surgeon
Darrel L. Cass, MD - Lead Pediatric Surgeon and Co-Director of Texas Children’s Fetal Center
Jennifer E. Dietrich, MD - Chief of Pediatric Gynecology
Patricio Gargollo, MD - Pediatric Urologist
John A. Goss, MD - Director of Liver Transplantation
Kalyani Govindan, MD - Anesthesiologist
Larry H. Hollier, MD - Chief of Plastic Surgery
Helena K. Hippard, MD - Lead Anesthesiologist
David Khechoyan, MD - Plastic Surgeon
Chester Koh, MD - Pediatric Urologist
E. Dean McKenzie, MD - Cardiovascular Surgeon
Oluyinka Olutoye, MD, PhD - Pediatric Surgeon and Co-Director of Texas Children’s Fetal Center
Olutoyin A. Olutoye, MB, ChB - Anesthesiologist
William A. Phillips, MD - Chief of Orthopedics
Scott B. Rosenfeld, MD - Orthopedic Surgeon
Audra Rushing - Lead Surgical Nurse
Stephen A. Stayer, MD - Anesthesiologist

Dr. Faisal G. Bakaeen, MD

Adeline Faith Mata, conjoined twin girls born at Texas Children’s Pavilion for Women in April 2014.
10th Current Trends in Aortic, Cardiac and General Thoracic Surgery

The Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery in the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery held its 10th Current Trends in Aortic, Cardiac, and General Thoracic Surgery conference on May 8-9 with 50 presentations by nationally and internationally renowned speakers covering a wide variety of conditions and procedures. The meeting, held at the Royal Sonesta Houston Hotel and co-hosted by Dr. Joseph S. Coselli and Dr. David J. Sugarbaker, attracted an audience of over 250 during its two-day-long sessions.

In addition to talks on aortic and structural heart surgery, for the first time the meeting offered attendees the opportunity to join dedicated concurrent sessions on General Thoracic Surgery covering diseases of the lung and esophagus. These sessions were hosted by Dr. Sugarbaker and moderated by Dr. Bryan Burt and Dr. Shawn Groth.

On Friday, Dr. Edward B. (Ted) Diethrich gave the keynote address titled, “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: A Personal Perspective by an Appreciative Alum of the Texas Medical Center.” Dr. Diethrich completed his cardiothoracic training here at Baylor under Dr. Michael E. DeBakey. The luncheon address titled, “Thoracic Trends in Aortic, Cardiac, and General Thoracic Surgery” was delivered by Dr. Lars G. Svensson, chairman of the Sydell and Arnold Miller Family Heart and Vascular Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, delivered the Sixth E. Stanley Crawford Lecture, honoring the legacy of the man whose contributions to aortic surgery are legend. Dr. Svensson was also fortunate to train here at Baylor with Dr. Crawford and Dr. DeBakey before venturing on to the Cleveland Clinic.


The 10th Current Trends conference was a complete success, for which we are indebted to division administrator Alan Stolz, MEd and the cardiothoracic surgery staff and faculty. We are looking forward two years to the next event in the series, to which Dr. Coselli promises to add a session on vascular surgery – making this a unique program comprehensively addressing the practice of today’s cardiothoracic surgeon.

Dr. Mattox Honored as Second Vice-President of the American College of Surgeons, Accorded Distinguished Lectureship

Kenneth L. Mattox, MD has been elected second vice-president of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), the world’s largest surgical professional society. Coincident with this honor, the ACS also recently announced plans to create the Kenneth L. Mattox International Lectureship and Scholarship Program under the direction of the ACS Committee on Trauma – a singular honor afforded only the most esteemed members of our professional community.

Dr. Mattox is a long-serving member of the ACS since becoming a fellow in 1975. He was in the Board of Governors from 1985 to 1991, and again from 1997 to 2004. He also participated on many of its committees and leadership councils; he was chairman of the Medical Device Committee (1983-1985) and senior member of the Committee on Trauma (1989-1995), among others.

Dr. Mattox is a distinguished service professor at Baylor College of Medicine and chief of staff and surgeon-in-chief at Ben Taub Hospital, where he has worked since 1973. His reputation as an innovator in trauma care is known worldwide.

Dr. Mattox is past president of the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma and in 2014 became vice-president of the American Surgical Association. Currently, Dr. Mattox serves as consultant to the Center for Biologic Evaluation and Research of the FDA and is one of the editors of Sabiston Textbook of Surgery. His textbooks Trauma (now in seventh edition) and Top Knife have educated physicians worldwide for decades. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Houston, Doctors’ Club of Houston, Wayland Baptist University, the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma, the Southeast Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council, and as immediate past chairman of the Board of the John P. McGovern Museum for Health & Medical Science.

Of his life-long involvement in the surgical community here at Baylor and around the world, Dr. Mattox said: “It is an incredible opportunity to participate in organizational and educational venues that continually improve the quality of care afforded our patients and serve as forums that allow leaders in health care to develop and excel.”
Second Annual Surgical Jeopardy

The Department’s much anticipated Second Annual Surgical Jeopardy was held on January 28, coinciding with our residents finalizing their preparation for their American Board of Surgery In-Training Examination (ABSITE). A team-based competition inspired by the popular television series, our Surgical Jeopardy contest is designed to highlight didactic training, while in a fun-filled hour matching residents against an elite faculty team for annual surgical knowledge bragging rights. The two-round competition, in which residents scoring highest on the prior year’s ABSITE exam were invited to compete against a resident ABSITE “all-star” team and select top first year residents, took place before the entire Department and was again moderated by Dr. Todd K. Rosengart. Drs. Mary L. Brandt, Bradford G. Scott, Matthew J. Wall Jr, and Eric J. Silberfein participated as consulting judges and score keepers.

This year, the teams competed to answer questions in the categories of chemotherapy, syndromes, important nerves, trauma, hepatobiliary, colorectal, hernias, thymus and pancreas, pediatric surgery, esophagus, needles, suture materials, and burns. The residents won again – and claimed their prize of an all-expense paid trip to a national academic meeting of their choice.

THE COMPETITION

Round One
For the first round of the competition, nine outstanding residents were selected from a group with high scores on the previous year’s ABSITE exam:

Team 1: Drs. Somala Mohammed, Darrell Wu, Alexa O. Levey
Team 2: Drs. Gala M. Barden, Zachary S. Pallister, Nader Zamani
Team 3: Drs. J. Adam Davis, Catherine Seger, Nestor A. Arita

Round Two
The winners of round one faced a resident-all-stars team and a faculty team on the Double-Jeopardy competition:

Winners of Round One: Drs. Somala Mohammed, Darrell Wu, Alexa O. Levey
Resident All-Stars: Drs. Sonia T. Orcutt, Sara C. Fallon, Nicole Villafane
Faculty All-Stars: Drs. David J. Sugarbaker, S. Rob Todd, Neal R. Barshes

Second Annual Surgical Skills Olympics

The Second Annual Surgical Skills Olympics took place on Wednesday, April 15 in our state-of-the-art Surgical Simulation Center, opened in 2014. As with our Surgery Jeopardy competition, the Olympics were designed to focus our residents on a core competency of their training – in this case, their technical skills. Resident teams competed to demonstrate their surgical dexterity and skill and, in the final relay round, their speed.

Teams led by a chief resident competed in seven surgical skills activities. The exercises included both open and laparoscopic skills, open bowel and vascular anastomoses, and laparoscopic skills such as peg transfer, pattern cutting, and intra-corporeal suturing, as well as open techniques like knot tying with dominant and non-dominant hands and suturing.

The gold medal team consisted of residents Drs. Carlos H. Palacio (captain), Somala Mohammed, Catherine Seger, Michael L. Kueht II, Genna Lubrano, Erin Dixon, and Nestor A. Arita.

Transplant Hepatology Holds First ECHO Clinic

Faculty members in the Division of Abdominal Transplantation held their first Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) clinic for advanced liver disease in collaboration with the University of Utah. The clinic uses the latest teleconferencing technology to allow for off-site tumor board-like collaboration.

As noted in a recent article in The Houston Chronicle, the ECHO program will allow the Baylor expert multidisciplinary liver center team to access underserved areas of Texas. Dr. Norman L. Sussman, associate professor, leads the ECHO effort at Baylor and hopes to increase complex liver case referrals, such as hepatocellular carcinoma and end-of-stage liver disease, and identify patients that are candidates for transplantation.

The team plans to hold their first independent clinic with a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Bay City this November. FQHCs qualify for enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid; the majority of liver transplant recipients qualify for Medicare and Medicaid.
First Annual Kickball Championship

On Sunday, April 26th, the Department of Surgery Wellness Program sponsored its First Annual Kickball Championship Competition at Karl Young Park. The senior team was led by Dr. George Van Buren II, and the junior team was led by Dr. R. Mario Vera. The turnout was great! It was a riveting game. The seniors gained an early lead by kicking first, but the juniors soon jumped ahead with a fantastic grand slam. It is worth noting that Dr. Ricky Haywood-Watson II made an incredible kick that left the kickball deflated atop of a fence. The game continued with a soccer ball instead. Despite the seniors’ attempts to catch up, the juniors prevailed. The final score was 8 juniors-4 seniors.

2015 Resident Match

Over 2,000 students from medical schools around the country applied this past year for admission as categorical residents into the General Surgery Residency Program at Baylor College of Medicine. Candidates who ultimately matched into our program hailed from some of the top schools in the country, including the Mayo Medical School, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, and Boston University. The aggregate average USMLE score of our new class of PGY1 residents was 250 – translating into the top 15% of applicants. The aggregate average USMLE score of our new class of PGY1 residents was 250 – translating into the top 15% of applicants. This first-ever designation for our lab includes accreditation in the areas of Extracranial Cerebrovascular Testing, Peripheral Venous Testing, and Peripheral Arterial Testing by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC).

Early detection of life threatening heart disorders, stroke and other diseases is possible through the use of vascular testing procedures performed within hospitals, outpatient centers, and physicians’ offices. While these tests are helpful, there are many facets that contribute to an accurate diagnosis based on vascular testing. The skill of the technologist performing the examination, the type of equipment used, the background and knowledge of the interpreting physician and quality assurance measures are each critical to quality patient testing. IAC testing is certification that the Baylor Vascular Lab has demonstrated its ability to meet these exacting standards.

Accreditation by the IAC more specifically means that the Baylor Vascular Lab has undergone a thorough review of its operational and technical components by a panel of experts. The IAC grants accreditation only to those facilities that are found to be providing quality patient care in compliance with national standards through a comprehensive application process including detailed case study review. IAC accreditation is a “seal of approval” that is held to the highest standards through a comprehensive application process including detailed case study review. Accreditation by the IAC more specifically means that the Baylor Vascular Lab has undergone a thorough review of its operational and technical components by a panel of experts. The IAC grants accreditation only to those facilities that are found to be providing quality patient care in compliance with national standards through a comprehensive application process including detailed case study review. IAC accreditation is a “seal of approval” that is held to the highest standards through a comprehensive application process.

Baylor Clinic Peripheral Vascular Lab Receives Accreditation by the IAC

We are proud to announce that the Baylor Clinic Peripheral Vascular Laboratory in the Division of Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Therapy has been granted a three-year term of accreditation in Vascular Testing. This first-ever designation for our lab includes accreditation in the areas of Extracranial Cerebrovascular Testing, Peripheral Venous Testing, and Peripheral Arterial Testing by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC).

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Left to right: Charles H. McCollum, MD; Anthony Greisinger, MD; L.D. Brit, MD, MPH; Jonathan Nelson, MD, and Todd K. Rosengart, MD

2015 Seybold Lectureship

The 2015 William D. Seybold, MD Distinguished Lectureship, supported by the Kelsey Research Foundation, was delivered by our distinguished guest, Dr. L.D. Britt, Henry Ford Professor and Edward J. Brickhouse Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Dr. Britt presented, “The 21st Century: The Renaissance Period for American Surgery,” at a special Surgery Grand Rounds event on April 29th. Since 2005, the Kelsey Research Foundation has supported the William D. Seybold Distinguished series. William D. Seybold, MD was a highly-regarded general and thoracic surgeon who joined his friend Mavis P. Kelsey Jr., MD to build the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic that today continues their names as leaders of Houston medicine. Each year, the Foundation selects a leader in the field of surgery who has demonstrated a strong commitment to excellent surgical care and research and who carries on the tradition of outstanding care established by Dr. Seybold. Previous recipients include Drs. Danny O. Jacobs, Carlos A. Pellegrini, Timothy J. Eberlein, Kirby I. Bland, Raphael E. Pollock, Eric J. Silberfein, and Mark A. Talamini.

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Malesa Jackson, BS
Grants and Contracts Specialist

In 2001, I joined the Department to provide services in the areas of pre- and post-award grants management in accordance with grantor specifications and timelines. I am responsible for the day-to-day management of grants and contracts including monitoring expenditures, budgeting (including clinical trials), and requesting carry forward funding and no-cost extensions for grants. I assist with timelines of grant and contract due dates for deliverables, and closeout of accounts.

I received a bachelor’s degree in science (personnel concentration) from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Upon moving to Houston, I started a grants administration career path. I have stayed in this path for over 20 years providing client services in the area of grants and contracts administration. I first joined Baylor’s Department of Neurology as an administrative professional, and then the Department of Neuropyschology at Methodist Hospital as a grants specialist. I was promoted to administrative supervisor with 24-hour responsibility for cost centers and general administrative operations, and later as grants consultant. After several years at Methodist Hospital, I spent approximately one year working in the non-profit industry with Community Partners where I was responsible for assisting with fundraising for this agency which provided childcare, food, and other much needed services to the underserved of the Houston community.

I chose a career in grants administration because while I was working in another Baylor department as a post award grants administrator I was continuously rewarded for my attention to details. I am a detailed oriented person so this career just fit; however, I would mostly say though, that this career chose me!

We have great coworkers and leaders in the Department of Surgery. I like working with people and knowing that we are all here supporting the vision of advancing the care for our patients and advancing research to improve and extend lives. This provides a sense of purpose that helps to drive my contributions to this department.

S. Rob Todd, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery

I began my professional education at The University of Texas at Austin where I graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance. After this, I attended Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center for medical school. I chose to remain in the Texas Tech System for my residency in General Surgery because the primary teaching hospital was public and offered phenomenal clinical opportunities. Despite the grueling hours (pre-80 hour work week, I might add), I thoroughly enjoyed my residency experience. It was during these days that I developed a passion for Trauma, Emergency Surgery, and Surgical Critical Care. As such, I completed a Trauma and Surgical Critical Care Fellowship at the Oregon Health & Science University after my residency. I am currently double-boarded in General Surgery and Surgical Critical Care. My clinical interests are broad, covering the gamut of my specialty.

Somala Mohammed, MD
Fourth-year General Surgery Resident

I am a fourth-year general surgery resident in my second year of dedicated research time. I can’t believe how fast (and how slowly) time has gone by while at Baylor. Houston has been home to me since I was 10 years old. My parents moved here with their seven kids from Canada (to where we moved after having lived in Kuwait). I am the first doctor in the family, and it’s great to train in the city I’ve considered home for almost two decades.

I studied biochemistry and cell biology in Rice University and graduated in 2007. Then, I attended Harvard Medical School. My exposure to medicine came early, as I have a sister who received extensive surgical care during childhood for complex facial burns. However, my personal experiences with the field initially drove me away from medicine, and it was not until late in college that I decided to apply for medical school. While at HMS, I absolutely loved my surgical rotations. In fact, some of my fondest memories are of times spent with phenomenal surgeons and mentors on the surgical oncology services at Mass General and the Brigham.

My interests in surgery currently remain somewhat broad, and I look forward to returning to clinical duties in order to discover where the rest of my training will take me.

Sydney Webster, MEd
Lead Coordinator for General Surgery

I joined the Department in Oct 2014 when my husband matched into the ophthalmology residency at UT in June 2014 and we moved from South Carolina to Texas. I was very excited to start my work at Baylor.

I am the lead coordinator for General Surgery. I assist our Program Director Dr. Bradford Scott and the Associate Program Director Dr. Eric Silberfein in managing our residents. Under the leadership of my manager, Holly Shilstone, I have been able to transition very well into my role. I am responsible for the resident’s educational activities, rotation schedules, travel, credentialing, graduation requirements – all while adhering to ACGME standard practice and policies.

I have a master’s degree in higher education and student affairs from the University of South Carolina, which I feel prepared me very well for this position in terms of assessment, event planning, organization, leadership, and working with adult learners. I have past experience in public relations in both the private and public sectors, along with over five years of higher education experience in medical education.

I have always enjoyed working with learners to help them reach their potential and achieve success. I come from a medical family, so I have always been interested in medicine. I enjoy the staff side of medicine – I will let my husband take care of the clinical side!

My greatest satisfaction is being able to work with great people in a collaborative, team-oriented atmosphere and have the appreciation of the residents. I am fulfilled when they feel supported and heard.

It is such an honor to work in the Department of Surgery here at Baylor, a place with so much rich history and innovation. There are very few institutions that have as many “firsts” in surgery as Baylor does. It is a treat to be able to be surrounded and work alongside these physicians!

CONTINUED PAGE 16
George Woodard Retires after 48 years in Baylor Labs

George Woodard has seen many generations of residents and fellows become professors or have years of private practice. He has even seen them retire. George taught them how to scrub in, how to suture a valve, and how to do a procedure just like Dr. DeBakey liked it. He has celebrated good times with them and calmed their anxieties. “We had a good group of guys working here,” George said. “There were long 16-hour work days, but you couldn’t get us to take off.”

During his career at Baylor, George became a tremendous asset for faculty members doing research. “Just name any of the ground breaking surgical advances that have come out of Baylor Surgery Department since the 1970’s to present,” said Deborah Taylor, assistant director of Baylor’s Simulation Center. “George was always there assisting at the OR table.”

In the beginning he learned to do electron microscopy, and later, how to draw blood from dogs and care for them to help Dr. Robert O’Neal in pathology with his experiments about high-cholesterol diets. When he began helping Dr. DeBakey, George went around to all the morgues in the medical center looking for cadaver heart valves. They used the leaflets of the aortic valves in their total artificial heart experiments in animal models.

Then, he “learned a little surgery.” He scrubbed in and helped with open heart procedures in calves. “The surgeons did all the heart procedure, but we opened and closed the animal, and took care of them afterwards. There were no residents to help us, so we did all the work.” At the time the calves were housed in the fourth floor of Main Baylor, right where the SIM lab is located today.

Long working days were lightened up with humor, George said, smiling as he recalls an anecdote with Dr. DeBakey. George was assisting Dr. DeBakey with an experimental surgery and Dr. DeBakey said, “Honey, I need suture.” George did not move or respond. Polk Smith said “George, he is talking to you.” George replied, “Dr. DeBakey surely would not call me ‘Honey’.” “I could see his eyes smiling above the mask,” said George, laughing.

Now, getting ready for his retirement from Baylor’s Simulation Center, George reminisces about his major satisfactions. After a long day, “knowing that I did a good job, that the animal made it,” was very rewarding, he said. Most of all, he will miss the people. “I am a people’s person,” he said, and, as strange as it may sound, “I kind of miss the holler with them afterwards. There were no residents to help us, so we did all the work.” At the time the calves were housed in the fourth floor of Main Baylor, right where the SIM lab is located today.

George, in the name of the Department we thank you for all you have given to research and countless generations of surgeons. Our door will always be open for you.

“IT was a new era. Nobody had ever operated on the heart much...It seemed a very exciting frontier in medicine.”

Jimmy F. Howell, MD 1932-2014

On December 2014, our friend and colleague Dr. Jimmy Frank Howell passed away at the age of 82. Dr. Howell was a faculty member in the Department of Surgery at Baylor for over 50 years.

A native of Winnfield, Louisiana, Dr. Howell grew up in Texas and graduated from Lamar University in 1953. He joined the Department during the early era of cardiovascular surgery when its development was very rapid and new “firsts” seemed to be the norm rather than the exception. Dr. Howell, a.k.a. “Slick” (because he always kept his hair carefully combed), earned his medical degree in 1957, completed his General Surgery Residency in 1962, and his Thoracic Surgery Residency in 1963 at Baylor. He was trained by Drs. Michael E. DeBakey, Denton A. Cooley, E. Stanley Crawford, Oscar Creech Jr., and George C. Morris, to name a few.

Early in his career and inspired by Dr. H. Edward Garrett, he sought a surgical solution to coronary occlusive disease. This work resulted in the first successful coronary artery bypass operation in 1964 with Dr. Garrett.

Dr. Howell went on to perform more than 60,000 surgical procedures; more than 30,000 of these were for cardiac or vascular cases.

Of his time, he once said, “It was a new era. Nobody had ever operated on the heart much. It was sort of a sacred item. Once people learned that they could operate on it successfully, it became something that was exciting to do to correct abnormalities - valvular, congenital and acquired abnormalities. It seemed a very exciting frontier in medicine.”

Dr. Joseph S. Coselli, professor of Surgery and chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, knew Dr. Howell well and reflected, “Jimmy had a naturally outgoing and friendly nature. He stood tall in his cowboy boots. He shared with me many the intricacies of East Texas linguistics, such as the use of the phrase “all hat and no cattle” to describe an empty boast.”

Outside the medical environment, Dr. Howell supported a number of charitable organizations through the Howell Family Foundation, including the newly created Jimmy and Roberta Howell Chair in Cardiovascular Surgery at Baylor’s Department of Surgery.

George looks on as residents Justin Choi, MD and Fariha Sheikh, MD train on a simulator

George Woodard, Res. Tech III
Now, I look forward to working with the many great Baylor surgeons. Surgical Critical Care into one of the preeminent programs in the country.

I chose to come to Baylor (and specifically to Ben Taub Hospital) because of its rich history and vast clinical and research opportunities. I envision my colleagues and me transforming Baylor's Trauma, Emergency Surgery, and ICU management.

I am very excited about my recent appointment as director of the Surgical Critical Care Residency Program. In this position, my role is to train surgeons in the field of surgical critical care, preparing them to be leaders in the field.

As for my academic pursuits, I primarily focus on outcomes research and am currently honing in on blood product transfusion practices in the critically ill population. I have been honored to publish and present locally, nationally, and internationally and to work at great institutions in the past, most recently New York University School of Medicine, where I served as the chief of Trauma and Emergency Surgery. This and other prior opportunities have positioned me for my current role here at Baylor College of Medicine.

In 2002, Dr. LeMaire's research group initiated the Thoracic Aortic Disease Tissue Bank, which currently houses samples and corresponding phenotypic data from over 3,000 patients with thoracic aortic disease. The tissue bank has served as a core for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)-supported Specialized Center of Clinically Oriented Research in Thoracic Aortic Aneurysms and Dissection as well as a resource for numerous collaborative studies evaluating the genetic factors and molecular mechanisms involved in the development of thoracic aortic disease.

Dr. LeMaire's basic science laboratory research is currently focusing on the role various aspects of extracellular matrix metabolism play in the development of aortic aneurysms and dissections. In particular, his group is studying the role of destructive factors, such as inflammatory cells and proteases, as well as reparative mechanisms, such as stem cell recruitment and transformation, during the development of aortic aneurysms and dissections.

The focus of Dr. LeMaire's research program, which derives directly from his clinical interest in the surgical treatment of patients with thoracic aortic aneurysms and dissections, encompasses outcomes after thoracic aortic repair, strategies for preventing perioperative complications, genetic factors related to aortic disease, and the pathobiology of aortic wall degeneration.

Honors and Awards

FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS

Neal R. Barsnes, MD, MPH: Society for Vascular Surgery EJ Wylie Fellowship (Mentor: J. Mills Sr., MD)
David H. Berger, MD, MHCMe: Editor-in-Chief, Perioperative Care & Operating Room Management
Bryan Burt, MD: American College of Surgeons Franklin Martin Faculty Research Fellowship
William E. Cohn, MD: Innovations in Cardiovascular Interventions Best Start-Up Award
Joseph S. Coselli, MD: Inaugural TSRA Travel Fellowship Mentor (A. Jassar, MD); President, American Association for Thoracic Surgery
John A. Goss, MD: Baylor College of Medicine Master Clinician Award
Peter Jindra, PhD: Chair, American Society of Transplantation, Community of Practice Committee
Panagiotis Kouglis, MD and Peter I. Tsai, MD: Baylor College of Medicine Rising Star Clinician Awards
Scott A. LeMaire, MD: Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Surgical Research
Kenneth L. Mattox, MD: Second Vice-President of the American College of Surgeons; Kenneth L. Mattox International Lectureship and Scholarship
Allen L. Milewicz, MD: Chief Surgical Officer, Texas Children's Hospital West Campus
Bradford G. Scott, MD: Clinical Faculty of the Quarter, Baylor College of Medicine
Eric J. Silberfein, MD: Association for Surgical Education Phillip J. Wolfson Award
James W. Sullivan, MD: Editor, American College of Surgeons Young Fellows Community Moore Foundation Patient and Family Engagement Early Career Investigator Award by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Peter I. Tsai, MD: American College of Surgeons Scholarships Committee Editorial board, Journal of Surgical Research
Sanjeev A. Vasudevan, MD: Editorial board, Scientific Reports

FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI L.L.P. FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARD
E. Dean McKenzie, MD
Ourania Preventza, MD

FELLOW, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
Avo Artinyan, MD, MS
Bryan Burt, MD
Bindi J. Naik-Mathuria, MD
S. Rob Todd, MD
George Van Buren II, MD

FELLOW, AMERICAN SURGICAL ASSOCIATION
Oluyinka O. Olutoye, MD, PhD

FELLOW, THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TRANSPLANTATION
Ronald H. Kerman, PhD

IN THE OR LIGHT: TODD

As for my academic pursuits, I primarily focus on outcomes research and am currently honing in on blood product transfusion practices in the critically ill population. I have been honored to publish and present locally, nationally, and internationally and to work at great institutions in the past, most recently New York University School of Medicine, where I served as the chief of Trauma and Emergency Surgery. This and other prior opportunities positioned me for my current role here at Baylor College of Medicine.

I am very excited about my recent appointment as director of the Surgical Critical Care Residency Program. In this one-year program residents train to a level beyond that acquired during a general surgery residency. I will have the opportunity to help them learn about sophisticated clinical decision-making strategies, the use of advanced monitoring techniques, and the intricacies of the administrative, legal, economical, and ethical considerations of ICU management.

I chose to come to Baylor (and specifically to Ben Taub Hospital) because of its rich history and vast clinical and research opportunities. I envision my colleagues and me transforming Baylor’s Trauma, Emergency Surgery, and Surgical Critical Care into one of the preeminent programs in the country.

Now, I look forward to working with the many great Baylor surgeons.
RESIDENT AND STUDENT AWARDS

Paulette Abbas, MD: Best Poster Award, Sixth Annual Texas Children’s Surgical Research Day
(Mentors: D. Cass, MD; O. Olutoye, MD, PhD; and H. López, MD)

Adesola C. Akinikuotu, MD: Best Oral Presentation, Sixth Annual Texas Children’s Surgical Research Day
(Mentors: D. Cass, MD; O. Olutoye, MD, PhD; and H. López, MD)

Jennifer Carpenter, MD: Association of Academic Surgeons Travel Award (Mentor: M. Brandt, MD)

Anand V. Ganapathy: Travel Scholarship to attend the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Society for Vascular Surgery.
(Mentors: R. Gilani, MD and H. Maillid, MD)

Ricky Haywood-Watson II, MD, PhD: Society of Thoracic Surgeons Looking to the Future Scholarship
(Mentor: D. Sugarbaker, MD)

Jason Chak-Shing Ho, MD: T32 fellowship (Mentor: J. Curley, MD)

Michael S. Hughes: Third place for Outstanding Poster Presentation at the 56th Annual National Student Research Forum (Mentors: H. Shen, MD, PhD and S. LeMaire, MD)

Meredith C. Mason, MD: Third place Best Oral Presentation; South Texas ACS Chapter (Mentor: D. Anaya, MD)

Soma Mohammed, MD: American Association for Cancer Research Scholar-In-Training Award
(Mentor: J. Nuchtern, MD)

Vivekkumar B. Patel, MD: First place Best Oral Presentation; S. Texas ACS Chapter Best Poster, 2015 CVRI Symposium (Mentor: T. Rosengart, MD)

Celia Robinson, MD: Second place Resident Award Poster Presentation at the 35th Annual Meeting of the Surgical Infection Society (SIS)

Yesenia Rojas, MD: Best of The International Society of Paediatric Surgical Oncology (IPSO) session (Mentor: J. Nuchtern, MD)

Brandi B. Scully, MD, MS: Women in Thoracic Surgery Scholarship (Mentor: S. LeMaire, MD)

Fariha Sheikh, MD: Starr Resident Award, Association of Women Surgeons (Mentor: O. Olutoye, MD)

Yan Shi, MD: Best Oral Presentation at the IPSO/SIOP Congress (Mentor: S. Vasudevan, MD)

Samuel Stal, MD: Third place for Outstanding Poster Presentation at the Sixth Annual Texas Children’s Surgical Research Day (Mentors: J. Nuchtern, MD and S. Vasudevan, MD)

Sonia Tewani Orcutt, MD: Best Poster Award, Sixth Annual Texas Children’s Surgical Research Day
(Mentors: D. Cass, MD; O. Olutoye, MD, PhD; and H. López, MD)

Galina Toneva, MD; Catherine Seger, MD; Ankur Bakshi, MD; J Galvan, MD; Yan Shi, MD; J. Yan, MD; Alicia D’Ann Lay, MD; Nader Zamani, MD; and Nikhil Agrawal, MD: Winners of the Department of Surgery Wellness Program First Annual Kickball Championship. The senior team was led by George Van Buren II, MD and the junior team was led by R. Mario Vera, MD

Nader Zamani, MD: Travel Scholarship by the Society for Vascular Surgery to attend the 2015 Vascular Annual Meeting in Chicago

Yanqiu (Yan) Zheng, MD: the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Outstanding Poster Award at the 56th Annual National Student Research Forum in Galveston, Texas
(Mentors: H. Shen, MD, PhD and S. LeMaire, MD)

Publications

From January to May 2015, department members have published 106 papers, books, and books chapters. Here are some highlights of these outstanding publications:


New Grants

Starting in January 2014, department faculty members have submitted new grant applications for $65 million, and received $7 million in new extramural research funding. Here are highlights of these outstanding research programs:

Daniel A. Anaya, MD: Third year of funding by the Office of Rural Health of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

Bryan Burt, MD: American College of Surgeons grant award for his project titled: “Allogeneic Antibody Therapy for Non-small Cell Lung Cancer”

William E. Fisher, MD: Two-year Roderick D. MacDonald Award for his project titled: “Pancreas Surgery Consortium via a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) of Drain Placement,” and Three-year grant NIH sub award with UTHSC for his project titled: “Development of Hybrid Somatostatin Analogs for Surgical Guidance”

Ramyar Gilani, MD: Two-year grant award from the Department of Defense (Sub award with UTHSC at Houston), for his project titled: “Hemorrhage control for major traumatic vascular injuries”

John A. Goss, MD: One-year NIH-sponsored Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS) in Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC)

Hu Ying Shen, MD, PhD: American Heart Association Grant-in-Aid for her project titled: “Destructive Role of ADAMTS-4 in Aortic Aneurysms and Dissections”

QiZhi Cathy Yao, MD, PhD: Five-year NIH R01 grant for her project titled: “A Novel miR-198 Replacement Therapy for Pancreatic Cancer”

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