# SURGERY NEWS

THE MICHAEL E. DEBAKEY DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

### Baylor College of Medicine

### 2023 ISSUE 1

500 Robotic Heart Surgeries: Fastest Growing Program in the Country Reaches Milestone MICHAEL E. DEBAK DEPARTMENT C SURGER

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#DeBakeySurgeon

### **ROBOTIC SURGERY**

Advanced robotic technology high-definition 3D uses and robot-controlled scope instruments inside fine the chest, which allows Dr. Liao to perform precise, gentle and complex surgical maneuvers inside the heart. The advantages of robotic cardiac surgery include very small incisions through the rib space, less blood loss, lower risk of stroke and wound infection and quicker recovery.





The multidisciplinary team celebrates their 500th robotic heart surgery

# 500 Robotic Heart Surgeries: Fastest Growing **Program in the Country Reaches Milestone**

Kenneth K. Liao, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Transplantation and Circulatory Support at Baylor College of Medicine, performed his 500<sup>th</sup> robotic heart surgery this July.

"This is a huge milestone for us and our patients," says Dr. Liao. "More and more cardiologists are referring their patients to us for robotic cardiac surgery because they recognize the benefits for the patient including less blood loss and a quicker return to normal life."

Dr. Liao and his team at the Texas Heart Institute and Baylor St. Luke's use state-of-the-art robotic technology to perform minimally invasive mitral valve repair and coronary artery bypass grafting surgery. He is the only cardiac surgeon in the Texas Medical Center using the da Vinci Robotic Surgical System to treat valve and coronary disease and among only a handful of highly experienced robotic cardiac surgeons in the United States using it.

Dr. Liao's robotic cardiac surgery program at the Texas Heart Institute at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center is among the top 10 programs in the United States Since his arrival in 2019, he has performed over 500 robotic heart surgeries, making it the fastest-growing program in the country.

Play video: Dr. Liao discusses minimally invasive and robotic heart surgery

"Cardiologists are referring their patients to us because they recognize the benefits for the patient."

# RESEARCH UPDAT



Hosts, investor 'sharks' and finalists from part 2 of the INSTINCT event

## **INSTINCT Holds First Shark Tank Event**

This spring, the Interdisciplinary Surgical Technology and Innovation Center (INSTINCT) crowned Inspectra Diagnostics as winner of our first-ever Shark Tank competition designed by the department to instill engagement in innovation and commercialization of ideas and inventions developed by department members and their outside collaborators. The Shark Tank top award was \$25,000 given to the winning developers to assist them in their product development.

This award, announced at a standing-room-only Shark Tank final round, capped two rounds of competition that included 10 teams of scientists, students and surgeons pitching their ideas and products to a group of savvy shark investors drawn from the department. The Shark Tank judging panel included inventors from the department, other Baylor departments and commercialization leaders from the Texas Medical Center Innovations Center.

As on the Shark Tank television show, inventor teams presented a variety of business ideas and products ranging from medical devices at prototype stage to drug delivery systems that have been tested in research for years and then answered questions from the sharks. The first Shark Tank round included inventors' presentations at our Grand Rounds in October 2022, with second round finalists presenting in April 2023.



Inspectra Diagnostics diagnostic testing

### The Winning Team

Inspectra Diagnostics presented a revolutionary approach to thyroid testing. Their diagnostic test uses mass spectrometry imaging and machine learning to aid in the diagnosis of thyroid nodules. This new testing approach is faster and less expensive than alternative testing or surgical removal of the thyroid. It also helps patients avoid lifelong side effects caused by partial thyroid removal.

### **Finalists**

Other finalist teams included CANARY Analytics, a team that pitched software that uses ICU data and machine learning combined with artificial intelligence to prevent adverse events after surgery, and CO<sub>2</sub> Cautery, an improved electrocautery tool that reduces tissue dissection time by at least 40%.



### WHAT IS INSTINCT?

INSTINCT was founded in 2013 by Dr. William "Billy" Cohn, to provide the resources to all members and innovators in the department to take an idea from an early concept through all the stages of development including intellectual, financial, design, administrative and networking support.

"INSTINCT is a platform where other members of our department can have an idea, figure out how to change that into a device, or invention or therapy and ultimately make that available to patients," says Todd Rosengart, M.D., professor and chair of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery.



INSTINCT offers a variety of events, funding, mentoring and more to encourage and aid surgeon inventors in the development of their ideas: Think Tanks are informal meetings between surgeons, scientists and businesspeople to talk about ideas, solutions, patenting and more. The Idea Awards are seed grants up to \$10,000 to fund the beginning stages of prototyping and

researching if there is value in an idea.

Shark Tank is a biannual competition for teams to pitch their ideas for feedback and potentially win a \$25,000 award to continue to develop their idea.

Livia Eberlin, P.hD. and James Suliburk, M.D. hosting the first Shark Tank



Attendees and presenters at the Research Day poster session

# Conference a Perfect Blend of the Past and the Future of Surgery

### **Department Combines Research Day with Alumni Symposium**

This year, our 11th Annual Research Day was combined with the Michael E. DeBakey Surgical Society Alumni Symposium. The event was held on June 9 and 10 and featured sessions highlighting the clinical, educational and research accomplishments of the department and its alumni both nationally and internationally.

"We were fortunate to welcome the alumni society back as it has been almost 10 years since we have hosted in 2014," says Holly Shilstone, director of advancement and alumni affairs. "It is so important to connect with our alumni and their amazing contributions in the field of surgery and also share with them the incredible growth and contributions of the department of surgery from all of our divisions and mission areas."

There were over 200 faculty, staff, students, trainees and alumni in attendance for the two-day event that featured division highlights and abstract presentations. Social activities included an informal reception Friday night and a dinner party at the conclusion of the event on Saturday.

### Awards

### Best Clinical Research Presentation by a Resident or Fellow

Dr. Paige Brlecic "Lower Socioeconomic Status Adversely Affects Outcomes After Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting" Mentors: Drs. Ravi Ghanta and Todd Rosengart

### Best Basic Science Presentation by a **Resident or Fellow**

Dr. Oluyinka Olutoya, II "Investigating Sex-Based Differences in Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia with a Novel Translational Model and Spatial Transcriptomics" Mentor: Dr. Sundeep Keswani

### Best Quick Shot Presentation by a **Resident or Fellow**

Dr. Christopher Ryan "Machine Learning for Dynamic and Early Prediction of Acute Kidney Injury after Cardiac Surgery" Mentor: Dr. Ravi Ghanta

### Best Quick Shot Presentation by a Student

Samantha Xu "Energy Metabolism Dynamics in Sporadic Aortic Aneurysms and Acute Dissections" Mentors: Drs. Scott LeMaire and Ying Shen

Best Quick Shot Presentation by Clinical, Research, or Education Staff Dr. Alejandro Zulbaran-Rojas "Electrical Stimulation to Regain Lower-Extremity Muscle Perfusion and Endurance in Patients with Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS CoV-2: A Randomized Control Trial" Mentor: Dr. Bijan Najafi

### Best Poster Presentation by a Resident or Fellow

Dr. Andy Espinoza "Preclinical Testing Pipeline Reveals Novel Treatment Strategies for Chemotherapy Resistant Hepatoblastoma" Mentor: Dr. Sanjeev Vasudevan

### Best Poster Presentation by a Student Christopher Sylvester "Dantrolene Inhibits Lysophosphatidylcholine-Induced Valve Interstitial Cell Calcific Nodule Formation" Mentor: Dr. Jane Grande-Allen

### Best Poster Presentation by Clinical, Research, or Education Staff

Naima Rodriguez "Frailty Evaluation by Physical Activity Monitor in Veterans with Cancer" Mentor: Dr. Bijan Najafi





Craig Miller, M.D. and Charles McCollum, M.D.

### Keynote Speaker

The keynote speaker, Craig Miller, M.D., author of A Time for All Things: The Life of Michael E. DeBakey, presented "Decadus Mirabilis: Michael E. DeBakey and the Ten Years that Made Vascular Surgery." In appreciation of his enormously impactful work chronicling Dr. DeBakey's contributions and preserving his

Advisory committee members

### **DeBakey Surgical Society Advisory Committee**

The Michael E. DeBakey Surgical Society, which merged into the department this past year, held its advisory committee meeting on June 9, with 11 of its committee members in attendance. The society's mission is to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Michael DeBakey by supporting the community of former and current trainees and faculty members of the department. Key activities include organizing periodic alumni scientific symposia and alumni events in conjunction with national conferences, selecting alumni award recipients and maintaining the alumni database, alumni communications and archives.

The department plans on bringing the alumni back to Houston in two years for the Michael E. DeBakey Surgical Society's next alumni symposium to be held in 2025.



# Surgeon Co-Authors New Treatment Approach for Saving Limbs, Begins Term as Society President

Joseph L. Mills Sr., M.D., professor and chief of the Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy, is co-author of the article "Transcatheter Arterialization of Deep Veins in Chronic Limb-Threatening Ischemia" published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. This study, called PROMISE II, investigated a new, minimally-invasive treatment approach called transcatheter arterialization of the deep veins (TAD), which involves creating a connection between an artery and a vein to deliver oxygenated blood to the foot in patients with chronic limb-threatening ischemia who have no other options for revascularization, in order to prevent major limb amputation.

The study enrolled 105 patients with nonhealing ulcers and no available conventional surgical or endovascular revascularization treatment options. The results showed that TAD was successful in 99% of patients and 66% of the patients had amputation-free survival at six months. No device-related adverse events were reported.

Overall, the study showed that TAD is a safe and successful option for patients with chronic limbthreatening ischemia who are facing the prospect of leg amputation and have no other available conventional surgical or endovascular revascularization treatment options.

### Society for Vascular Surgery

Mills currently serves as the 2023-2024 Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS) president. The mission of the SVS is to advance excellence and revolution in vascular health through knowledge, outreach, research, and awareness. The society is a national advocate for vascular surgeons and additional medical personnel who are dedicated to the prevention and study of all vascular disease.

# EDUCATION UPDATE



Center for Global Surgery team in Geneva

# **Center for Global Surgery Team Visits Geneva**



Marking the advent of this new program designed to expand the study of delivering surgical care to the underserved worldwide, Dr. Davis was joined by center members Yao Yang, M.D., Katayoun Madani, M.D., and Sabrina Bernhard in participating at the World Health Assembly meeting in Geneva in April. They advocated for safe, timely and affordable surgical care; met other stakeholders and collaborators to form relationships within the community and learned about high level advocacy, diplomacy and policy within the field of global surgery. Sabrina Bernhard, administrator for the Center of Global Surgery, notes "Having a seat at the table in the global health capital of the world during the most pivotal weeks in the year was truly surreal. We cannot wait to return next year."

### Play Video: Global Surgery Track



2023 Summer students pose in front of the Michael E. DeBakey Library and Museum

### **Renowned Summer Surgery Program Begins Again**

The 2023 Michael E. DeBakey Summer Surgery Program launched in June with 14 students from schools around the nation joining the department to experience close engagement with our surgery teams. In existence for over 60 years, the program has produced many graduates who have gone on to careers in medicine and surgery.

The program familiarizes the student as observers with hospital and operating room environments as well as work-life and time management skills. Students selected for this eight-week program are assigned to a surgery faculty mentor whom they shadow in their surgical service activities at one of the following hospitals: Ben Taub Hospital, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center or Texas Children's Hospital.

Students are introduced to the fundamentals of a surgical practice and have the opportunity to acquire skills used in the evaluation and treatment of surgical conditions. Perioperative evaluation, operative principles and post-operative care are emphasized. Functioning as a sub-intern on a busy surgery service, students work with faculty, residents, medical students, nurses and administrative personnel. The student is expected to become an integral part of the team by participating in rounds, operative cases, patient care and conferences.

assigned to a surgery faculty mentor whom they shadow in their surgical service activities at one of the following hospitals: Ben Taub Hospital, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center or Texas Children's Hospital. The program success couldn't be possible without Bradford Scott, M.D., vice chair for education, Ramiro Fernandez, M.D., program director, Holly Shilstone, director of advancement and alumni affairs and senior consultant for education, and Caitlyn Williamson, senior program coordinator.



Samer Mattar, M.D., Olubunmi Oladunjoye, M.D., M.P.H. and Ann Xu, M.D. during a panel discussion

### Metabolic and Weight Loss Conference a Success

The Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery held Course directors were Samer Mattar, M.D., professor its first CME-accredited metabolic and weight loss and chief of the Division of Metabolic and Bariatric conference on May 20, with participants attending Surgery, Olubunmi Oladunjoye, M.D., M.P.H., both in person and virtually. "Metabolic Syndrome assistant professor in the Department of Medicine and Severe Obesity: A Modern Multidisciplinary and Matthew Yang, M.D., assistant professor in Approach" was a one-day course of lectures and the Department of Medicine. The conference was interactive panel discussions providing learners with highlighted by Demis Lipe, M.D., a physician who the current state of metabolic syndrome as a disease gave a very powerful account of her experience as of epidemic proportions and current understanding a patient, including the bias and prejudice that she of causes and available treatments that help reverse faced in the two years prior to her surgery and the difference bariatric surgery has made in her life. the disease.

### **Center Receives Excellence Designaton**

St. Luke's Health Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center has received the Optum Center of Excellence Designation (COE) for Bariatric Surgery. Programs designated as an Optum Bariatric Center of Excellence meet higher standards such as fewer complications and readmissions which translates to a higher level of successful procedures than other comparable programs.

# HEALTHCARE UPDATE

## New Clinic Brings Care Closer to Home

We are now able to offer patients in The Woodlands an opportunity to see surgeons without driving all the way to the Texas Medical Center.

**Stacey Carter, M.D.**, medical director of Breast Surgery at St. Luke's Health– The Woodlands Hospital and associate professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology, specializes in the use of localization methods for targeted removal of small volume breast disease. She has a strong interest in oncoplastic surgery and works closely with the plastic surgery and reconstructive team at Baylor College of



Medicine to optimize aesthetic outcomes. In her spare time, Dr. Carter enjoys traveling, walking and hiking and spending time with family.

Mark Mettauer, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, has served The Woodlands community for almost 20 years and is now partnering with Baylor Medicine at this new site. He brings a wealth of experience in minimally cardiac and thoracic surgery, peripheral vascular disease and endovascular techniques.



Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, and outdoor sports.

Vivek Patel, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, is a Baylor College of Medicine alumni and cardiothoracic surgeon whose practice encompasses cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgeries, including ECMO and minimally invasive cardiac surgeries. Dr. Patel has published numerous abstracts, manuscripts and textbook chapters in



clinical and basic science research, while also filing a patent for a novel strategy for cardiac regeneration. In his free time, Dr. Patel enjoys spending time with his family and two children.

## First Heart Transplant Performed at Houston VA



Department of Surgery surgeons together with other Baylor College of Medicine physicians recently sent home the first patient ever to have undergone a heart transplant at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC).

While it is not unusual for doctors at Veterans Affairs to coordinate or carry out heart transplants, this milestone event makes MEDVAMC only the second VA facility in the nation with a heart transplant program. This success was recently followed by two additional heart transplants and comes after the implantation of four left ventricular assist devices in a program begun at the MEDVAMC in 2022. The VA heart transplant program joins large and successful programs in liver and kidney transplant established in 2007 and 2014, respectively.

"We are so proud to be offering this service and providing options for veterans with heart failure in the south," says Alexis Shafii, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Transplant and Circulatory Support and program director, who performed the first transplant and is assisted in leading the program by Alexander Schutz, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. "Our patients can now stay closer to home and receive care in the region, rather than traveling to distant states for transplant care."



John Graves (center) with Steve Antoine, M.D., Savitri Fedson, M.D., M.A. and Alexander Schutz, M.D.

The first heart recipient was John Graves, an Air Force veteran and Texas resident. He had ischemic cardiomyopathy, a condition that makes it difficult for the heart to deliver blood to the rest of the body, which led to heart failure. His condition declined as he waited for the transplant: in May 2022, he could walk about 1,200 feet in six minutes but by December could only walk about 200 feet in the same time.

After transplant, Graves is recovering well and working with a physical therapist and looking forward to hiking and eventually running.

Looking to the future, Dr. Schutz noted that the program anticipates performing a total of more than a dozen heart transplants and circulatory support device implantations annually.



The Department of Surgery's team at the Fight for Air Climb event

### American Lung Association Honors Dr. Gabriel Loor for Lung Transplant Contributions

The American Lung Association in Texas honored Gabriel Loor, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Transplant and Circulatory Support, at the American Lung Association Fight for Air Climb on May 20.

"Dr. Loor has devoted his professional career to improving the lives of patients with lung disease."

"Dr. Loor has devoted his professional career to improving the lives of patients with lung disease. He is widely respected for his expertise and compassionate care, but his commitment to lung health goes beyond his clinical practice," said Charlotte Maffia, executive director of the Lung Association in Texas. "He is an inspiration to his patients, colleagues and community, and his commitment to building a better future for patients with advanced lung disease is truly admirable."

At the event, Dr. Loor was honored for his contributions to lung transplantation. He pioneered the use of portable ex vivo lung perfusion for donation after cardiac death lung transplantation, becoming the first surgeon in the United States to do so. These advancements have greatly improved the field of transplants and have led to better outcomes for patients. Dr. Loor's dedication to providing excellent care to patients has earned him many prestigious awards, including the Dr. Charles H. Bryan Annual Clinical Excellence Award in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery at the Cleveland Clinic.

Dr. Loor has also been a staunch supporter of the Fight for Air Climb since 2018 and led a team this year to surpass their fundraising goal.

The Fight for Air Climb is an annual event held in cities around the country to support people with lung disease through fundraising and research.

# ALUMNI UPDATE

## Dr. John P. Williams

John P. Williams, M.D., a breast cancer surgeon and 1997 graduate from Baylor College of Medicine's General Surgery Residency Program, is deeply passionate about patient care and is equally committed to advocating for patient education and advancing cancer policies in the United States.

### Road to Becoming a Breast Cancer Surgeon

Dr. Williams originally wanted to be a neurologist. "I wanted to be a neurologist until I realized that surgery fascinated me more than the brain," Dr. Williams said. "My need to diagnose a problem and be capable of fixing it was insatiable."

He practiced general surgery initially, but ultimately specialized in breast surgery after he learned how he could help patients desperate for hope. "I appreciated surgery, and specifically breast cancer surgery, because it gave me an opportunity to help those facing the complexities of a diagnosis of cancer," he said.

### Advocacy and Patient Education

While Dr. Williams' clinical practice in Virginia has countless breast cancer patients, he wanted to do to advance cancer education and policy on a large In 2008, he founded the Novant–UVA Multidisci Breast Cancer Conference in Haymarket Virgi enhance the team approach of breast specialists w together. Under his leadership, the conference dev into The UVA Community Health Breast Cer 2009. The Center includes a multidisciplinary tea helps women receive better cancer care.

In 2018 when Dr. Williams realized the medical community wasn't teaching breast cancer patients what they need to know to be able to ask the right questions to get the best care, he created an online resource: The Breast Cancer School for Patients.

### **Advisor to Presidents**

Just one year after launching the online educational resource, Dr. Williams received a presidential appointment to be chairman of the President's Cancer Panel at the National Institute of Health. Each year the three-person panel issues an annual report with policy recommendations about an important topic in cancer.

Dr. Williams hopes all his efforts will continue to improve care for patients. "If I were to influence anything, it would be to reach more people through apps and free platforms that we don't already use. I also hope to bring a human touch to policy that helps heal cancer patients. If I can do that, I will have succeeded in my life's mission."





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# In the OR Light



### N. Thao N. Galvan, M.D., M.P.H. Associate Professor of Surgery Division of Abdominal Transplantation

Where are you from? Atlanta, GA

### What made you choose to become a surgeon?

I was delighted that my first rotation was surgery— I was happy to get it over with. I knew without a shadow of a doubt that I would never go into surgery. But I learned my preconceived notions of what made a surgeon were very far from reality. I realized that a surgeon was one willing and able to make sound judgments in high stakes situations. A surgeon is also someone who thrives on immediate results. In the end, choosing surgery was easy because I found that what truly makes a surgeon is one who appreciates that well-regarded risks can lead to great rewards.

Choosing transplant specifically was a more difficult decision. The training is time consuming and difficult, making it a significant investment for me and my family-but I was drawn to the technical demands of the operation and how my mentors in transplant exemplified the pursuit of excellence.

### What projects are you most proud of?

I am most proud of my collaborations with Rice Bioengineers on 3D printed organs and my qualitative work on imminent death donation. While they seem disparate, I think they both address a large need in society.

### What do you like most about your job?

I am able to experience the sheer magic of what it is to take a precious gift from one family and deliver it to another family. That inspires a great deal of gratitude.

### Is there anything you would tell someone thinking about going into surgery?

I will share two things that my anatomy professor shared with me that have stayed. The first thing is "Get up." As an intern, you will get a 3:45am page about a patient just as you lay your head down for a short rest. That patient, who you know ordinarily to be of sound mind, is now altered. You could easily prescribe the Ativan that is suggested and lay back down, or you could get up. Just. get. up. Go see the patient. In 15 years, I have never regretted losing sleep to check on the patient.

My professor's second and related precept was "Decide who you are going to be before you start." We are bound to fail sometimes, but by reminding ourselves who we resolve to be and having high expectations of ourselves, we will be more likely to become that ideal version of ourselves. That way, despite being tired or hungry or distressed, no matter what, we have principles that we stand by. And exhibiting principled behavior is what every person should have in their physician.

### What do you like to do when you're not working? I love to spend time with my children, playing chess and video games. I've really enjoyed indoor gardening, where I take dying plants and then resurrect them. I have an orchid ICU and am

graduating into propagation and hydroponic techniques. I'm feebly learning the piano. And I have date nights with my husband.



Raymond A. Lopez, M.D. **General Surgery Resident** 

Where are you from? Seoul, Republic of Korea

What made you decide to go into medicine? Medicine has felt like a calling, for as long as I can Where did you go to school? remember. I do not think that there is any other I got both my bachelor's and master's degree at profession more fundamentally decent, noble, or University of Houston-Clear Lake. meaningful than medicine and no other profession that demands more of you. I really couldn't imagine What made you choose your career? doing anything else.

### What made you choose surgery and how will you choose your specialty?

I like being able to identify a problem and fix it right then and there. As for my choice of specialty, it is going to come down to finding a balance between that which is meaningful, challenging, with colleagues I enjoy working with, and that lets me prioritize family when I need to.

### What do you like most about your job?

Getting a little better at it (hopefully) every day.

## thinking about going into medicine?

What do you like to do when you're not working? Is there anything you would tell someone When I'm not working, I like to spend time with my fiancé. We enjoy going to Galveston to walk The Be sure you could not see yourself doing anything Strand, window shop, explore the antique shops to else, then find others who feel the same. They will find unique decorations and enjoy a cup of gumbo be a huge help when things are inevitably hard. at our favorite restaurant on the island. I also work on craft projects when I have free time. Currently I What do you like to do when you're not working? am trying to learn how to make stained glass. If I can get out to the mountains in Colorado or to

the ocean to sail, I am there. If not, I'll pick up my guitar or cello, exercise, pet a dog and sometimes do nothing at all.



### My Le (Mylee) Hoang Dong Data Analytics Associate

### Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Vietnam, but I have lived in Houston for almost 10 years.

I got inspired by a book called How to Lie with Statistics during my junior year in college and wanted to be able to present data truthfully. Data is present in everyday life and in every field. I decided go into data analytics to use data to help organizations make vital decisions.

### What do you like most about your job?

The thing I like most about my job is that I get to work with different people from all areas of the department. I also enjoy helping everybody with their data to help them do their job more efficiently.

# LEADERSHIP UPDATE



Derek Erstad, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology, has been appointed as assistant director for the robotics training program in the General Surgery Residency Program. In this role, Dr. Erstad will provide leadership and oversight in

the growth and integration of the robotic training program across Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center and the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The new program includes multidimensional and proctored teaching, with progressive complexity spanning all five residency years.



Livia S. Eberlin, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology, has been appointed as an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Genitourinary Medical The Oncology at University of Texas MD

Under this role, she will continue to collaborate and lead research projects with collaborators and clinicians at MD Anderson.



Jeffrey Ross, D.P.M., M.D., associate professor of surgery in the Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy, has been named section chief of podiatry. Dr. Ross is a podiatrist specializing in diabetic leg amputation prevention and limb salvage. With over three

decades of experience in his field, he has participated in over 150 lectures and presentations and published 132 publications in various industry journals. He presents nationally and internationally on subjects learning through virtual simulation, wet lab training ranging from sports medicine and biomechanics to wound healing and limb preservation.



Quach, D.O., Zane assistant professor in the Division of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery, has been appointed to associate director of the surgical intensive care unit (SICU) at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center. In this role he will work with Michele Loor, M.D.,

Anderson Cancer Center. SICU medical director, to create a formal SICU quality improvement process, provide a forum for advanced practice providers and create practice management guidelines for surgical critical care. He will also continue his duties as director of the surgical immediate care unit and in the general surgery program.

### **Department Offers New Programs for Professional Development**



### **Professional Training Workshops**

Judy Le, president of TakeRoot Leadership Consulting and Coaching, led a training series this year designed to promote and develop leadership skills for the staff, residents and faculty of the department. The series of workshops begin with a speaking engagement at the department grand rounds and subsequent workshops designed to build a leadership framework for the respective groups. Training workshop topics included building and renewing trust, leading self and leading teams.

### Surgeon Data and Coaching Improvement Program

Seventeen department faculty members are part of a 12-week program aimed at improving individual performance through comprehensive physiological analytics and one-on-one coaching. The program is led by Bryan Ferguson, founder and CEO of Arena labs who shares his past experience as a United States Navy Seal to improve personal flourishing. Arena's platform combines objective physiological data, subjective performance data, assessments, content tools and other tools to provide feedback and improve performance. The goal of the collaboration is to build higher performing medical teams through data and coaching. The program includes wearable device monitoring of participants' physiologic response to stress and follow up sessions with the Arena team where they explore these responses and ways of lowering stress.

### **Top 20 for Five Years**

The Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery has been in the top 20 of US News and World Report for the past five years. The surgery program ranked as high as thirteenth over the past five years and this year came in just behind Emory, University of Pittsburg Medical Center and The Ohio State University and ahead of Chicago, University of North Carolina and The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. The surgery program was also the #1 ranked surgery program over the past five years. Of the five other departments eligible for ranking, Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine was also ranked in the top 20 at seventh place. The rankings are based on reputational survey of deans and other academic leaders.

Judy Le leads a workshop for general surgery residents

# Honors and Awards

Kyle Blackburn, a first-year medical student, won Rachel Davis, M.D., R. Taylor Ripley, M.D., the best poster award at the Cardiovascular Research Roberto Vera, M.D., Hyun Sung Lee, M.D., Institute Symposium, an annual Baylor College of Medicine conference. His mentors include Scott LeMaire, M.D., Joseph Coselli, M.D., and Marc Moon M.D.

Elizabeth Bonefas, M.D., Alexandria Sarenski, P.A., James Suliburk, M.D., and George Van Buren II, M.D., were named 2022 Patient Experience All Stars for achieving an overall care provider score above the 90th percentile for Press Ganey. This award measures patient experience including quality, satisfaction and overall experience with Baylor Medicine

Eugene Choi, M.D., Ronald Cotton, M.D., N. Thao N. Galvan, M.D., Ravi Ghanta, M.D., Peter Jindra, Ph.D. and Javer Chung, M.D., received a 2023 Norton Rose Fullbirght Award. This award was initiated in 2001, to provide an opportunity for Baylor College of Medicine faculty meeting designated standards of quality, quantity and breadth to receive recognition for their sustained, exemplary educational contributions. Faculty can receive awards in four categories: teaching and evaluation, educational materials, educational leadership and educational research.

Lily Cheng, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Pediatric Surgery, received the Ester Tsai Sugg Research Award for her project "AAS/SUS Research Awards Are Highly Successful in Fostering Future Surgeon-Scientists." The award is granted to the highest-scoring abstract from a Society of Asian Academic Surgeons.

Samuel Creden, M.D. and Jorge Portuondo, M.D., general surgery residents, won the Surgical Jeopardy challenge at the 18th Annual Academic Surgical Congress. They challenged other teams from across the nation in a friendly game of Surgical Jeopardy and were ultimately victorious.

Ph.D and Zachary Gray, PA-C received a Power of Professionalism (POP) award from Baylor College of Medicine. This award is given to those who demonstrate respect for the patient, family, the patient's local physician and who recognize the need for clear and compassionate communication, as well as recognizes and respects the value of differing opinions in clinical decision making.

Raymon Grogan, M.D. and Michele Loor, M.D. have been inducted into The Society of University Surgeons (SUS). Membership into the SUS is given to persons of well-established professional position and demonstrated scholarly or creative ability that positively impacts their field.

Melissa Koci, M.D.; Erin Greenleaf, M.D.; Juliet Holder-Havnes, M.D.; S Julie-Ann Lloyd, M.D.; Ashley Kaim, PA-C and Ashley Benning received 2023 Women of Excellence Awards. The award recognizes service to Baylor College of Medicine through demonstrated leadership in addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion above and beyond generally anticipated scope of responsibilities.

Nandan Kumar Mondal, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Transplantation and Circulatory Support, received the 2023 ASAIO Abstract Award for his abstract "Urinary Vitamin D Binding Protein and Kidney Injury Molecule-1 May Predict the Risk of Acute Kidney Injury in Heart Failure Patients Undergoing CF-LVAD Implantation." Dr. Mondal also was awarded a Travel Award from ISHLT 2023 Annual Conference in Colorado, Denver for his abstract, "Cardiac Mitochondrial Stress Burden and Impairment of Oxidative Phosphorylation are More Profound in Human Heart Donated after Circulatory Death Than Heart Donated after Brain Death."

Harveen Lamba, M.D., MSc, assistant professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Transplantation and Circulatory Support, won the 2023 ASAIO Abstract Award for the project "Incidence, Outcomes, and Risk Factors of Acute Kidney Injury in Patients on Percutaneous Mechanical Circulatory Support with Impella 5.0 and 5.5 for Cardiogenic Shock."

Kenneth L. Mattox, M.D., was awarded the Youmna Sherif, M.D., global surgery resident at prestigious 2023 John P. McGovern Compleat Baylor College of Medicine, was selected for an AMA *Physician Award*, joining an elite group of physicians Journal of Ethics Editorial Fellowship. As a fellow, who have been recognized by the Houston Academy she will develop and edit a complete issue for the of Medicine for enriching the field of medicine AMA Journal of Ethics, which will focus on surgical through their compassionate care, training and care for incarcerated patients and be published later research. this year.

Bijan Najafi, M.D., MSc, professor of surgery, Eric J. Silberfein, M.D., R. Mario Vera, M.D., director of Center to Stream HealthCare in Place and R. Taylor Ripley, M.D., have received and director of clinical research in the Division Professional Educator Appreciation and Recognition of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy, (PEAR) Awards from Baylor College of Medicine has been elected for induction into the American students. The PEAR awards were founded by Baylor students to recognize their instructors and faculty Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering College of Fellows. for excellence in teaching, mentorship, and/or for outstanding general assistance and inspiration.

Katie Nordick, M.D., general surgery resident, Sanjeev Vasudevan, M.D., associate professor won the 2023 ASAIO Abstract Award for the in the Division of Pediatric Surgery, has received project "Left Ventricular Assist Device Implantation: a \$100,000 Baylor College of Medicine Interim Why Cardiopulmonary Bypass Time Matters." Dr. Funding Award for his project, "A Novel Humanized Harveen Lamba was her mentor on the project. Pipeline for Liver Cancer Drug Response." The final goal is to predict patient responses to therapy Jeffrey Ross, D.P.M., M.D., associate professor and expand the use of combination strategies with targeted agents in new clinical trials.

of surgery in the Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy, has been appointed to the Medical Education Committee on the American Samantha Xu, M.P.H., a Sarnoff Research Fellow College of Sports Medicine. The committee identifies in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, won the strategies and develops resources to improve the ATVB Young Investigator Travel Award for her training of health care professionals to ultimately research project "Energy Metabolism Dynamics support their efforts in assessing and promoting in Macrophages of Sporadic Aortic Aneurysms physical activity with their patients. and Acute Dissections" at the annual Council on Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Alexander Schutz, M.D. was accepted into the Biology conference. Her research examines the American Association for Thoracic Surgery (AATS) gene expression profile of energy metabolism in 2023 Leadership Academy. The leadership academy macrophages of aortic aneurysm and dissection. Dr. is an intensive, didactic and interactive program Xu's mentors are Scott LeMaire, M.D., and Ying to help leaders improve their administrative, Shen, M.D., Ph.D.

interpersonal and mentoring skills.

She also won the 1st Place Young Investigator Oral Ying Shen, M.D., Ph.D., has received the Dr. Presentation Award at the 2023 Chinese American Mark L. Entman Teaching Award for Excellence in Academy of Cardiology Research Symposium. Cardiovascular Education. The award is given by The Chinese American Academy of Cardiology Baylor College of Medicine Cardiovascular Research (CAAC) is a professional organization for academic Institute based on learner feedback and evaluation professionals in cardiovascular medicine and research scores. and holds an annual conference for collaboration and learning.

Surgery News is a publication of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine

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