Karp takes the helm
State of the Section address covers mission, goals & growth

At the recent State of the Section address in September during surgical grand rounds, Seth J. Karp, MD, newly appointed chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences presented the address.

Karp’s presentation reviewed the history of the Section and surgery at Vanderbilt, and how Daniel Beauchamp MD’s efforts, guidance, and dedication brought us into the era of the “Modern Section.” He also discussed our successes in specific examples of innovations and complex operations that are yielding us notoriety and acclaim as evidenced in our new ranking by U.S. News & World Report as one of the top 20 hospitals in the nation.

Karp reviewed the current organization of the Section and revealed some changes and additions to that structure with new initiatives and goals.

In an interactive moment, he called on chief resident Eric Rellinger, MD and faculty member Mayur Patel, MD, MPH to describe what they have experienced at Vanderbilt and how it will serve them well into the future.

Ken Sharp, MD also made remarks about his many years of service and how they’ve allowed him to accomplish exactly what he wanted to achieve in his professional career.

Karp then introduced his current appointments as vice chairs for the Section. Each one present was given time to talk about how they see their roles and how they will be interacting with Section faculty from coding and growth, to surgical quality and safety.

The upbeat presentation outlined generous growth opportunities and support for individual surgical and research faculty now and in the future.

Those unable to attend may see the video at the link provided below; login is required.

Presentation link video

Section new and current vice chair positions

Dr. Adams  Dr. Brock  Dr. Dmochowski  Dr. Goldenring  Dr. Guillamondegui  Dr. Sweeting  Dr. Terhune  Dr. Wellons

Vice Chair for Finance - Raehanna Adams, MD, MBA
Vice Chair for Pediatric Surgical Services - John Brock, III, MD
Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs & Professionalism - Roger Dmochowski, MD, MMHC
Vice Chair for Surgical Research - James Goldenring, MD, PhD

Vice Chair for Surgical Quality and Patient Safety - Oscar Guillamondegui, MD, MPH
Vice Chair for Diversity & Inclusion - Raeshell Sweeting, MD
Vice Chair for Surgical Education - Kyla Terhune, MD, MBA
Vice Chair for Clinical Research - Jay Wellons, MD, MSPH
Solórzano named interim Department of Surgery chair

Carmen Solórzano, MD, professor of Surgery and chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology and Endocrine Surgery, has been named the interim chair of Vanderbilt’s Department of Surgery.

Solórzano will assume this additional role while a national search is conducted to fill the position vacated in July by Seth Karp, MD, H. William Scott Jr. Professor. Karp was named the new chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences, as the section’s previous chair, R. Daniel Beauchamp, MD, the John Clinton Foshee Distinguished Professor of Surgery, transitioned to his new role as Vice President for Cancer Center Network Affairs.

“Dr. Solórzano is an internationally recognized star in surgical oncology,” said Karp. “She has also provided outstanding leadership to the institution as the chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology and is routinely recognized as one of our finest teachers. I’m looking forward to working with her in her new role.”

Solórzano specializes in endocrine surgery, including neoplasms and cancers of the thyroid, parathyroid and adrenal glands, the pancreas and digestive system, as well as neuroendocrine tumors. She has authored more than 100 publications and lectured around the world. Solórzano, who came to the United States from Nicaragua at 19 to pursue an education, said she would never have imagined one day becoming a department chair, even interim.

“I am truly honored,” said Solórzano. “I look forward to working alongside Seth Karp, Kyla Terhune, MD, MBA, and Jeff Balser, MD, PhD, to serve and lead the faculty, staff and trainees during this transition.”

“I joined VUMC in 2010 and, over this time I have learned that our Vanderbilt mission of outstanding clinical care, research and education would not be possible without fostering our greatest resource — our people.”

Complete story link

Telemedicine clinic for kidney transplant screening debuts

With the opening of a pre-transplant kidney evaluation clinic in Jackson, Tennessee, the Vanderbilt Transplant Center is joining a range of other clinical programs participating in telemedicine at VUMC.

The new clinic, a first for the Transplant Center to utilize telemedicine technology, will serve as a supplemental resource and offer appointments once a month. The clinic saw its first patients in June.

“We will see patients who have been referred to us for kidney transplant in an effort to save them at least one trip to Vanderbilt,” said Rachel Forbes, MD, MBA, assistant professor of Surgery and Surgical Director of the Living Donor Transplant Program. “I think we are rare in offering this service.”

“We are so pleased Vanderbilt Telemedicine will be able to offer patients living far from the hospital the ability to be treated by some of the world’s finest specialty physicians,” said Seth Karp, MD, Chair of Surgical Sciences, H. William Scott Jr. Professor, and director of the Vanderbilt Transplant Center.

Complete story link
Danter performs nation’s first LVAD heart pump implant
New less invasive surgery helps reduce hospital stays for patients awaiting transplant

Artel Thorpe Sr. of Jackson, Tennessee, recently became the first person in the United States to undergo a new, less invasive surgical technique for implanting a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) heart pump since it was granted Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approval in July. Thorpe’s surgeon was Matthew Danter, MD, assistant professor of Cardiac Surgery.

The procedure allowed Thorpe to receive the implant through much smaller incisions in his upper and left chest versus having his sternum cut open. The new thoracotomy implant approach has been demonstrated to be safe and offers several benefits compared to sternotomy implantation. These include reduced length of hospital stay (from 26 days to 18), and improved health-related quality of life.

Although it was a newly FDA-approved procedure, Danter had actually performed the surgery multiple times as part of the landmark HVAD LATERAL trial. VUMC was the largest enrolling center of the 26 medical centers in the United States and Canada involved in this clinical trial that led to FDA approval. Danter said the benefits of the procedure extend to when these patients may eventually undergo heart transplant.

New breast health clinic in Cool Springs makes debut

Patients at high risk for developing breast cancer can now be seen by a team of Vanderbilt Breast Center experts in Cool Springs. The new breast health clinic, located at 324 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite B, Franklin, provides a range of medical services for high-risk individuals.

Women who are defined as average risk have a 12 percent risk of developing breast cancer during their lifetimes, but those with a 20 percent or higher chance of developing cancer are considered high risk.

“Patients may be at high risk because of a family history of breast cancer, inherited gene mutations, a previous cancer diagnosis, radiation exposure in childhood, or benign breast disease,” said Ingrid Meszoely, MD, MMHC, Ingram Associate Professor of Cancer Research and clinical director of the Vanderbilt Breast Center.

Meszoely, who is a distinguished breast surgeon, said the new clinic provides whole breast health services in a convenient location with free parking.

Complete story link

Complete story link
Patient and fashion designer Manny Cuevas receives ASCRS Local Hero Award from Geiger

Manny Cuevas, a Nashville fashion designer, was honored with the 2018 Local Hero Award, presented by the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS), the organization’s Annual Meeting in Nashville this past Spring.

Cuevas is a patient of Rick Miller, MD, chief, Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care and Tim Geiger, MD, MMHC, chief of the Division of General Surgery and the Director, Colon and Rectal Surgery.

After multiple surgeries for an intestinal block, Cuevas has had a permanent ostomy for more than five years. A successful fashion designer for decades, Cuevas has his own clothing line called “Wear It Out by Manny.” Ostomy recipients are an inspiration in his designs and he sees it as an opportunity to show the world that people with an ostomy can dress in the latest fashions.

“As much as I appreciate the award I was honored with, and as grateful as I am for it, the greatest reward I’ve ever been given is the simple opportunity to help others learn to not worry about how the world around us perceives our situation. We are still the beautiful people we’ve always been in our hearts, regardless of what changes we must deal with on the outside! And remember, advocacy to self-awareness is the most important part of coping with this hidden disease and we must always support the others around us who deal with the same problems and concerns!” said Cuevas.

“Manny has been an amazing advocate for ostomates. His passion for design helped him take something often regarded as private and concealed and put it on a fashion runway to increase awareness and acceptance.” said Geiger.

Cuevas has been a regular contributor to the manufacturer Hollister’s quarterly newsletter for ostomates and successfully advocated to have Ostomy Awareness Day officially recognized in the state of Tennessee. In Nashville, Cuevas Cuevas takes place in walks and runs to benefit the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation and the upcoming Run for Resilience Ostomy 5K in October.
Or maybe it really is as bad as it sounds. It is hard to tell people you have a brain tumor. Sometimes they get a glazed look on their faces. I get it. I feel that way too. I have been walking around for almost 10 years with the knowledge of this diagnosis — a tentorial tumor that doctors think is benign. That amount of time gives you time to “pooh-pooh” the diagnosis and, simultaneously, become as paranoid as possible and be driven crazy by the implications.

Finding out I had a brain tumor in 2008 was like an out-of-body experience. I was in shock, but before going in for that first MRI, I had noted in my work calendar that I probably had one of three things — multiple sclerosis, arteriovenous malformation (ruptures that cause bleeding in the brain or spinal cord) or a brain tumor. I felt no happiness at guessing it right with the brain tumor.

During my first appointment at VICC my neurosurgeon, Kyle D. Weaver, MD, assistant professor of Neurological Surgery, gave me the best advice ever. To this day, I replay the words when I get too overwhelmed: try and be happy every day. Those words have helped me live with uncertainty.

Every year when I get that scan, I am nervous, especially if I have had a year of unexplained, strange, new symptoms. I am not gunning for brain surgery. I know the risks and want something done only when it is the right time. I know that my story of this tumor is not over. A slow-growing tumor is still in my brain that doesn’t belong there. I take it day by day and year by year. I am 50 now, and it has been awhile since that day in 2008 when I was diagnosed. A ticking clock is the only way I can describe this journey. There is no answer. I just need to live my life day to day.
Englot research links role of brainstem in epilepsy

New research from Vanderbilt suggests that repeated seizures reduce brainstem connectivity, a possible contributor to unexplained neurocognitive problems in epilepsy patients.

The brainstem has been rarely studied in epilepsy because seizures typically originate in the temporal lobe or other areas of the cortex. Noting that people with temporal lobe epilepsy often lose consciousness even though the temporal lobe does not control wakefulness, Dario Englot, MD, PhD, assistant professor of Neurological Surgery, Radiology and Radiological Sciences, and Biomedical Engineering and surgical director of epilepsy at VUMC, said he decided to focus on the region that does control wakefulness — the brainstem. He hypothesized that connectivity disruptions with the brainstem resulting from a history of seizures might play a role in diminished cognitive functions that are not related to the temporal lobe.

The research, published in Neurology, is the first to investigate how epilepsy affects the ascending reticular activating system (ARAS) — circuitry that is responsible for regulating wakefulness — within the brainstem. Functional MRI revealed that ARAS disruptions occurred, with decreases in circuitry being quantitatively associated with disease severity.

“We think that problems develop in some deep subcortical circuits that may contribute to some of the unexplained global brain problems in temporal lobe epilepsy,” said Englot. “This includes problems with arousal and progressive neurocognitive decline that can’t be explained by problems in the temporal lobe.”
Willy Stern, the chair of “The Legion Fund,” a local organization that supports the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Ft. Campbell, came to VUMC recently to honor individual staff and physicians. Also present were Green Berets from the Unit. The VUMC employees who were publicly recognized work directly and indirectly in the ongoing education and training of U.S. Army personnel, specifically the 5th Special Forces Group medics.

Stern’s impassioned introduction of the three Green Beret soldiers in the audience explained how grateful he was for the relationship with VUMC as these battle-hardened medics carry the knowledge into field hospitals in war zones downrange. Stern was followed by Dr. Tim Nunez’s presentation of a symbolic “Legion” coin via congratulatory handshake to well deserving individual staff whom VUMC is recognizing as an integral part of the Legion effort.

Two Legion fund board members, Judge George Paine and Dr. Jeff Landman (an honoree himself), presented the coveted commemorative wooden “Gladius” swords that were given to key physicians and nurses who work directly with the military and its patients. The Gladius is the designated symbol of the 5th Special Forces Group also known as the “The Legion”.

L to R – Master Sergeant Andy Lane, Mike Elam, Shannon Langston, Captain Brian Krebs, Tim Nunez, Buddy Kopp, Cathy Wilson, Kendall Rice, Tina Cole, Jason Lane, Willy Stern, Micah Holland, Jeff Leach, Lt. Colonel Shawn Alderman, Judge George Paine, Jeff Landman.

Others being honored but not present: Adam Pendleton, Jim Fiecht, Debbie Oaks, Diane Johnson, Cathy Rogers, Jason Ridley, and Melissa Smith.

* Regretfully Kendall Rice, pictured with Dr. Tim Nunez at top left, was a victim of gun violence and died on August 14, 2018.
State honors life of legendary researcher Thomas Blalock’s surgery assistant contributed to life-saving heart surgery

The General Assembly of the State of Tennessee has honored the life and accomplishments of Vivien Thomas, an African-American laboratory assistant at Vanderbilt who developed several operative techniques, designed surgical instruments, supervised surgical laboratories, and instructed at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine for more than 35 years.

Thomas graduated with honors from Pearl High School in 1929 and took a job as a laboratory technician at VUSM, where he served from 1930-1941 and worked 16-hour days for Alfred Blalock, MD. Together they performed operations on animals that would advance Blalock’s studies of high blood pressure and traumatic shock. When Blalock left Vanderbilt to become chief of surgery at Johns Hopkins Medical School, he insisted Thomas be hired as part of his team.

Along with cardiologist Helen Taussig, MD, they were pioneers in the field of cardiovascular surgery, developing a procedure to alleviate the congenital heart defect cyanotic heart disease, commonly known as “blue baby syndrome.”

Thomas first created a blue baby-like condition in an animal model, then corrected it. In nearly two years of lab work he demonstrated to Blalock that the operation could be safely attempted on a human patient. During this first procedure in 1944, Thomas stood on a step-stool behind Blalock coaching him through the procedure. Thomas family members attended his portrait’s unveiling.

Complete story link

VUMC Neurosurgery history profiled in journal
Drs. Thompson, Chambless, Wellons, Kelly, Zuckerman, and Schoettle recount 1927 to present

The July 2018 issue of Neurosurgery features a detailed history of the VUMC Department of Neurosurgery, its faculty and residents. Authored by department faculty and staff, the article highlights the early history of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and the emergence of specialized Neurosurgery divisions/departments from the early 1950s through present day. It further includes a complete listing of the Department’s clinical faculty.

The article notes that outcomes-based research programs are exceptionally strong at Vanderbilt Neurosurgery. Key developments over the past two decades are also featured, including the growth of pediatric and fetal neurosurgery, deep brain stimulation, and the neurosurgery team and facilities.

Also noted is the program’s record of producing three Department Chairmen and two each of American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) presidents, Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS) presidents, and Cushing Medalists.

The article closes with the Department’s aims to continue its mentoring history, new phases of its residency training program, new research avenues, and enterprise expansion.

Complete story link

8 Vanderbilt Section of Surgical Sciences • Summer 2018
Tears were rolling down Joshua Surovey’s cheeks. He had awakened not long ago from kidney transplant surgery and was in some pain, but these were tears of joy and gratitude. When Renee Bruens saw his tears, hers began to flow, too. She had one question, and it was one of the most important of her life: was her kidney functioning in his body? Yes, it was.

A year ago, they had been complete strangers. Now, surrounded by friends and family on the seventh floor of Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital’s Critical Care Tower, Joshua and Renee shed tears of joy at the successful transplant, at the new start it provided Joshua, and at the unlikely series of events that brought them together.

Josh’s weight and chronic high blood pressure had led to kidney failure. He needed a donor fast and spread his message everywhere: billboards, Facebook—甚至是站在路边自制的标志。他得到了很多的鼓励，但没有得到一个捐赠者。直到Renee出现了。她在YMCA看到Josh的捐款贴纸，并开始关注他的Facebook页面。这就是奇迹的开始和最终匹配，使他们成为“兄弟姐妹”。

David Shaffer, MD, Division Chief, Kidney & Pancreas Transplantation and professor of Surgery, was Joshua’s physician. Rachel Forbes, MD, MBA, assistant professor of Surgery and Surgical Director of the Living Donor Transplant Program, was Renee’s physician.

Shaffer and Forbes help “brother-sister” kidney transplant patients unite
Surgeons bear witness to the ultimate kindness of strangers

Dr. Forbes

Dr. Shaffer

Ashish Shah, MD, Alfred Blalock Endowed Directorship and Department Chair and professor of Cardiac Surgery, was one of three participants to receive funding at the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Day competition for VUMC and VU personnel. Shah’s project—which focuses on the use of personal patient biometric information and AI to predict complications and readmission after heart surgery—was one of 140 ideas submitted. The VUMC cardiac surgeon received $30,000 from the Evelyn Selby Stead Fund for Innovation for fiscal year 2019.

Shah secures artificial intelligence funds hoping to predict future readmissions

Anna Means, PhD, assistant professor, Division of Surgical Oncology and Endocrine Surgery, and colleagues have now linked inflammation-driven carcinogenesis in the colon to loss of an important signaling protein called SMAD4. Reported in the journal *Cellular and Molecular Gastroenterology and Hepatology,* this link helps establish chronic inflammation as a predisposing condition for colorectal cancer, the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S.

Means’ research identifies colon cancer link

Complete story link

Journal link
New center offers research collaboration for best practices between ED, Trauma & SCC including other departments and divisions

VUMC, through the Institute for Medicine and Public Health (IMPH), Center for Health Services Research and the Department of Emergency Medicine, has established a new Center for Emergency Care Research and Innovation (CERI) to help determine the best care for patients who experience trauma or require emergency services — even before they get to the hospital.

Which patients who suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrest should be rushed directly to the catheterization lab, bypassing the emergency department? What is the best way to respond to an opioid overdose? Can the emergency department help identify and rapidly respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases like influenza?

Sean Collins, MD, MS, professor and vice chair for Research in the Department of Emergency Medicine, will direct the Center, which expands existing collaborations between investigators in the Division of Emergency Medicine Research, the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care, and other departments and divisions across VUMC.

“We’re on the front door for these diseases,” said Collins. “We see the first blip on the radar. Having somebody on the front line who is going to skate to where the puck is going to be and not to where it is currently … that’s the key.”

Vanderbilt named to nation’s ‘Honor Roll’ of top hospitals

VUMC has been named to the ‘Honor Roll’ of the nation’s top hospitals by U.S. News and World Report in their 2018-2019 ranking of ‘America’s Best Hospitals.’ VUMC is one of only 20 hospitals nationwide to earn this distinction.

In addition to ‘Honor Roll’ status, 10 of VUMC’s specialty programs are nationally ranked, with three specialties — Gynecology, Nephrology and Urology — rated in the top 10 among peers.

The rankings, released in August, reflect VUMC’s long-standing commitment to offer compassionate, personalized care to patients and their families, and highlight the capabilities of its people to advance scientific discoveries into innovative clinical care.

To arrive at these rankings, the U.S. News’ methodology is based largely on objective measures such as risk-adjusted survival and readmission rates, volume, patient experience, patient safety and quality of nursing, among other care-related indicators.

VUMC is nationally ranked in these 10 specialties:

• Cancer
• Cardiology and Heart Surgery
• Ear, Nose and Throat
• Gastroenterology
• Gynecology
• Nephrology
• Neurology and Neurosurgery
• Orthopaedics
• Pulmonology
• Urology

VUMC is also recognized as nationally high-performing in eight procedures and conditions:

• Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Repair
• Aortic Valve Surgery
• Colon Cancer Surgery
• Congestive Heart Failure
• Heart Bypass Surgery
• Hip Replacement
• Knee Replacement
• Lung Cancer Surgery

Complete story link
Transplant fellowships complement unique needs of patients

The complex nature of transplantation requires significant attention to all aspects of transplantation, including business and administrative issues. Vanderbilt’s focus on ancillary transplant personnel has led to three unique training programs — a transplant pharmacist postgraduate year 2 (PGY2) residency, a transplant administrator fellowship, and a nurse practitioner fellowship.

The Vanderbilt Transplant Center (VTC), in partnership with the Department of Pharmacy, established the PGY2 residency program in 2006. The program is in high demand from pharmacists who desire specialty training.

“The infrastructure of the VTC allows for an interdisciplinary environment that creates a culture of teamwork and enhanced communication among all members of the transplant service,” said Ed Zavala, MBA, administrator for VTC.

Vanderbilt continues to be the only center in the country with a transplant administrator fellowship. It was started in 2011. The nurse practitioner training program began in 2017 and offers a one-year fellowship to prepare nurses to provide quality, evidence-based patient care.

VTC also offers multidisciplinary research opportunities that incorporate pharmacists, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers and dietitians.

“It’s a unique approach,” said Zavala. “It’s not just physician-led or driven by the surgeons. It’s a collaborative effort among the entire team and an integral component in the continued success of the Transplant Center.”

Complete story link

Mettler envisions bright future for youngest heart transplant patients

Bret Mettler, MD, assistant professor of Cardiac Surgery at Monroeville Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, is optimistic about the field of pediatric cardiac transplantation as it turns toward different sources of technologic advancement.

“At Vanderbilt, we are fortunate to have one of the largest pediatric mechanical support programs in the United States. Our partnership with our adult mechanical support program has been instrumental in maximizing benefits for our patient population.”

“In pediatrics, we often utilize existing technology, most often designated for much larger patients, and modulate it into therapies that can work for children,” Mettler said. “It’s what we have been doing for years within the field of mechanical support as a bridge to transplantation.”

While the lack of research and design dollars for new advancements in pediatric heart transplantation continues to be one of the biggest barriers to innovation, Mettler said there is good news on the horizon.

One novel therapy that is showing promise is ABO-incompatible heart transplants. Children’s Hospital performed the state’s first procedure in 2013. It has done five to date. The procedure — reserved for children 2 years old and younger who have not yet developed significant levels of anti-ABO antibodies — helps a transplant recipient tolerate an organ from a donor whose blood type is incompatible.

In the past, children listed as ABO incompatible for heart transplants were at the “bottom of the list” in terms of matching with a donor. But recent outcomes showing improved survival rates have sparked growing interest in the technique and a reallocation strategy for patients who can receive this type of heart transplant.

Complete story link
Renovated Eskind Library reopens
Improvements will support future generations of physicians

The Annette and Irwin Eskind Family Biomedical Library and Learning Center opened in July after a year-long, $12.9 million renovation with infrastructure improvements and updates to support the continuing evolution of medical education.

The construction project was designed to incorporate the university’s research, learning and teaching goals and includes features that complement the School of Medicine’s innovative Curriculum 2.0. It also meets LEED Silver certification standards.

“This project reflects Vanderbilt’s immersive, collaborative brand of education and will support the learning needs of the next generation of physicians, nurses and biomedical scientists,” said Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Susan R. Wente. “The renovated library and learning center space will help keep Vanderbilt at the forefront of supporting biomedical research and medical education, and we are grateful to the Eskind family for their generous support.”

The project was supported with a visionary $6 million gift to Vanderbilt University from the Eskind family in 2016. Longtime Vanderbilt benefactor Annette S. Eskind and her two sons and their wives, Dr. and Mrs. Steven J. Eskind and Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey B. Eskind, made the gift to continue the vision of the late Dr. Irwin Eskind.

Vanderbilt medical students will now call the renovated Eskind library and learning center their new home. Their learning hub moved from its longtime quarters in Light Hall to Eskind’s second, third and fourth floors, which feature flexible, technology-enhanced classrooms, study spaces, a lounge and a rooftop patio as well as offices for administrators and staff. The ground and first floors are dedicated to library space, and the History of Medicine collection will be housed on the third floor.

September M&M conference recognizes Vogt for her “Good Catch” assisting a post-op heart transplant patient

Victoria Vogt, RN in the CVICU received a “Good Catch” award for her efforts to identify problems with a post-op heart transplant patient with a balloon pump. Per her usual routine, Victoria evaluated the IV drips hanging from bag to pump to patient.

She identified the error that had occurred in the OR. She immediately alerted the heart team who address the problem and corrected it.

The ‘Good Catch’ award was established by a committee of safety and quality team members to establish a process...

• that encourages staff to elevate their peers for “catching” opportunities related to quality or safety and intervening appropriately
• that allows the organization to recognize the efforts of staff who “Catch” errors or near misses from impacting staff or patients

Surgical executive leadership present well-deserving winners leader-signed baseballs.

To nominate someone via email 1) nominee name 2) role 3) department 4) summary of “good catch” event to goodcatchvuh@vanderbilt.edu
SMOOTH LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Beauchamp recognized for years of service and Section growth

R. Daniel Beauchamp, MD was honored in June for his many contributions and dedicated service as chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences, a position he held from 2001-2018. Beauchamp, the John Clinton Foshee Distinguished Professor of Surgery, now serves as the Vice President for Cancer Center Network Affairs to expand off-campus cancer programs.

Under Beauchamp, the Section’s faculty nearly tripled and the strength, depth and reputation of each department increased exponentially. His emphasis on encouraging and promoting an environment where research and innovation can flourish has resulted in numerous new surgical offerings, many of which continue to set national standards.

Balser reception welcomes Karp as Section chair

Jeffrey Balser, MD, PhD, CEO and Dean rolled out a warm welcome to Seth Karp, MD, faculty and staff and special guests at a reception in July. Karps remarks addressed his friends, colleagues and peers who came to support and congratulate his new appointment.

Pictured right are Dr. Andre Churchwell, Dr. Seth Karp, Mrs. Lauren Karp, and Mrs. Dorethea Churchwell.
Goldenring leads unique effort to slow stomach cancer

When James Goldenring, MD, PhD, talks about the landscape of the stomach, he sounds a bit like a real estate agent: this is a desirable neighborhood, this one is a bit sketchy, and by all means, steer clear of this area.

In the case of the stomach, these “neighborhoods” are collections of different types of cells and microbial residents that comprise the normal stomach versus stomach tissue that is on its way to becoming a gastric cancer. That transition of stomach regions — from normal to injured to precancerous to gastric cancer — has been the focus of Goldenring’s research career.

“We’re most interested in the precancerous neighborhood and the cells and factors that are pushing it to progress to cancer,” says Goldenring, Paul W. Sanger Professor of Experimental Surgery. “To me, this is the place to intervene. We want to change the neighborhood back to normal.”

Goldenring and other investigators, working with international collaborators, are attempting to do exactly that — to halt the progression toward stomach cancer, or better yet, to reverse it. Their efforts are unique.

“Trials targeting pre-cancer are rare,” says Goldenring, who argues that the lessons learned about the development of stomach cancer will have broad relevance for multiple types of cancer.

Trauma Unit celebrates its 20th anniversary

VUMC’s Trauma Unit on 10 North in Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital opened 20 years ago this month, August 1998. Since its opening, close to 60,000 patients from Middle Tennessee and surrounding areas have been admitted to the 32-bed unit, the region’s only Level I trauma center.

Currently, the unit cares for about 5,000 patients per year. Longtime staff members gathered recently for an anniversary celebration, including, pictured bottom from left, John Morris, MD, associate chief of staff of the Vanderbilt Health System and former chief of the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care, who oversaw the creation and the opening of the unit in 1998; Marcia Burns, a VUPD officer assigned to the unit; Beth Mills, RD, dietitian; Veleria East, medical receptionist; Richard Miller, MD, chief of the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care; Linda Wilkinson, ACNP-BC, nurse practitioner; and Shannon Godby, RN. Mills, East, Wilkinson and Godby have worked in the unit since its founding.
Flynn and colleagues are studying the role of bile acids in reducing the desire for cocaine

India Reddy, MD, PhD, left, Nick Smith, and Charles (Robb) Flynn, PhD

Bile acids — gut compounds that aid in the digestion of dietary fats — reduce the desire for cocaine, according to a new study by researchers at Vanderbilt and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The findings, published in the journal *PLOS Biology*, suggest that targeting bile acid signaling in the brain may be a novel way to treat cocaine abuse.

Vanderbilt investigators Charles (Robb) Flynn, PhD, associate professor of Surgery, and Naji Abumrad, MD, John L. Sawyers Professor of Surgical Sciences, have long studied the metabolic changes associated with bariatric surgery for weight loss. Surgical patients experience dramatic changes in glucose regulation and in taste preferences and food cravings while they are still in the recovery room, Flynn said.

“If these surgeries are doing something more than we understand. We wondered if elevated serum bile acids, a hallmark of bariatric surgery, were affecting the reward centers of the brain to blunt the pleasure of eating high-fat foods,” he said.

“Will bile acids cure cocaine addiction in humans? We don’t know, but our research certainly suggests that bariatric surgery or consumption of bile acids may have beneficial effects,” Flynn said.

If the surgery did affect the brain’s reward centers, he added, “how might it impact the rewarding properties of drugs of abuse?”

Complete story link
Journal link

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**Coding accurately will prevent claims held up in the work queues**

**External Cause Coding - Simple Do’s and Don’ts**

When coding for external cause cases such as:

- falls
- dog bite
- gunshot wounds
- electrical shock, etc.

The primary code must be the injury itself and not the cause of injury. Both codes must be listed; however the primary code will always be the injury and the cause of injury will be coded as secondary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Code (Injury)</th>
<th>Secondary Code (Cause of Injury)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laceration to the Face</td>
<td>Dog Bite: W54.0XXA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fracture of Lower Right Leg</td>
<td>Fall from Ladder: W11.XXXA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puncture Wound with Foreign Body of the Chest</td>
<td>Gunshot Wound: W34.00XA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information or advice on coding contact
Dominique Chaney, Clinical Documentation and Coding Educator

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Larry Clift, 74, of Chattanooga, lies on an operating table with a sheet of plastic draped across his forehead, nearly splitting the room in two. On one side, bright lights illuminate a dime-sized hole in the top of Clift’s skull, surrounded by a white ring of exposed bone and a small ooze of blood. If you look closely, you can see his brain.

But, on the other side of the plastic, Clift is wide awake, eyes open, squeezing a stress ball with his right hand and chatting with a doctor in a white lab coat. She uses small talk to keep him calm while checking that his speech isn’t slurred, which would be a sign that the surgery has gone wrong.

“It’s a sunny day in Nashville,” says Dr. Kisha Young, encouraging Clift to repeat. “It’s a sunny day in Nashville,” he says back. His voice is weak but clear.

It’s a Tuesday morning in August, and Clift is mid-surgery at Vanderbilt, recently ranked one of the best hospitals in the country. For eight years, he has suffered from Parkinson’s disease, a disabling condition that has made his body stiff and weak. Relentless tremors have taken over his right arm, and doctors are certain they will spread to his left if they do not intervene.

This operation, as surreal and terrifying as it may sound, is supposed to help. During four hours of surgery, a team of doctors led by Peter Konrad, MD, PhD, professor of Neurological Surgery, placed a tiny electrode deep within Clift’s skull. Here electric shocks can stimulate the portion of his brain at the root of his disease. If the procedure works, his symptoms will fade with the flip of a switch.

At 14 years old, Andie Perona, a Goodlettsville native, was diagnosed with diabetes that would eventually damage her pancreas. And at 21 years old, she was diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease, an incurable condition that causes small cysts to slowly fill the kidney and eventually lead to kidney failure.

She was told she’d need a kidney transplant by the time she was 40.

She used that information to plan her career in the medical field. Today, she is a surgical technician on the VUMC transplant team.

“I wanted to learn more about polycystic kidney disease and how it could be treated. I knew I’d need a transplant, and I wanted to know how they would do this,” Perona said. “I was really intrigued, and I didn’t want to watch it on YouTube. I wanted to see it in real life.”

Transplant team members, L-R: Sandy Swint, surgical tech; David Shaffer, MD, chief of the Division of Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation; Andie Perona, Jesse Wright, MD, surgical resident; and Chris Fritts, RN

Complete story link
National Trauma Survivors Day was celebrated in May at VUMC on the hospital plaza with games, cake, and special guests and patients. Trauma survivor Doug Brown gets a “Stop the Bleed” (STB) lesson from Cathy Wilson, RN. A special appearance of Dr. Elvis, Oscar Guillamondegui, MD, MPH (right), posing with trauma survivor Thomas Mayberry and his mom.

To date, Vanderbilt Trauma physicians and nurses have taught the STB ACS curriculum standards literally statewide. The teams have been on the road training and preparing Tennessee schools, daycares, EMS, police, other medical personnel, State of Tennessee employees and concerned citizens.

To date, over 2,000 individuals trained and STB kits distributed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school students</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School nurses &amp; staff</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUMC employees</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool/daycare staff</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff at gun ranges</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious congregations</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>College students</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMS/fire department</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical staff, not VUMC</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police/safety officers</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUSOM students/staff</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of TN employees &amp; others</td>
<td>400+</td>
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During the VUSM Spring Meeting, select faculty received awards for Excellence in Teaching, Outstanding Contributions to Research and Extraordinary Performance of Clinical Service. Among the honorees was Chevis Shannon, MBA, MPH, DrPH, research associate professor for the departments of Neurological Surgery & Pediatrics. Shannon received the Elaine Sanders-Bush Award (For Mentoring Graduate and/or Medical Students in the Research Setting). Shannon and her fellow recipients were nominated by their faculty colleagues and chosen by the 2018 Faculty Awards Selection Committees.

Shannon came to VUSM in 2013 as assistant professor of Neurological Surgery and director of the Vanderbilt Pediatric Neurosurgery Clinical Research Initiative. In 2014, she was appointed founding director of the Surgical Outcomes Center for Kids (SOCKs), a new initiative designed to enhance the clinical outcomes research agenda among the Pediatric Surgical Subspecialties and collaborating departments. In addition to her gift for organizing and developing clinical research programs, Shannon is deeply passionate about mentoring and educating students.

In 2017 she was asked to join the Medical School Admissions Committee and to serve as a co-director for the Medical School Research Immersion program. (Dr. Shannon is pictured 4th from the left above)

Another surgical faculty member was also recognized at the Spring Meeting. Lillian Nanney, PhD, professor of Plastic Surgery, emerita, was honored by VUMC President and CEO Jeff Balser, MD, PhD, for her years of service to VUSM as an educator, researcher and founding director of the Academy of Excellence in Education, which promotes excellence and scholarship in the delivery of health professional education. (pictured 4th from the left below)

EDUCATION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Spring faculty meeting highlights excellence
Shannon earns award, Nanney recognized for service

Quarterly M&M schedule
Note different day of the week in December

NOTICE! DIFFERENT DAY!
Wednesday, December 5, 2018
(Early start 6:00 am)

SCHEDULE FOR 2019
• March 1, 2019
• June 7, 2019
• September 6, 2019
• December 6, 2019

Complete story link
Tarpley accepts position at University of Botswana

John Tarpley, MD, professor of Surgery and Anesthesiology Emeritus, will join the faculty of the University of Botswana in southern Africa, serving as Chair of Surgery to establish a General Surgery Residency Program for this country of 2 million people. Currently the University has residencies in Internal Medicine, Paediatrics, Family Medicine, and Pathology.

Tarpley, whose tenure included 23 years of service at VUMC and the Nashville VA Medical Center, had stepped down as Program Director of the Surgery Residency Program in 2014 to focus on an endeavor dear to his heart: training surgeons in Africa.

Tarpley and his wife Maggie began their efforts in Nigeria in 1978. Over the years, they have expanded their efforts to Kenya, to support the international surgery rotation run by Erik Hansen, MD, MPH, at AIC Kijabe Hospital, and to Kigali, Rwanda, to support Robert Riviello, MD, at the University Teaching Hospital.

The Tarpleys have agreed to stay in Gaborone, Botswana for the 2018-2019 academic year, but may extend their commitment to continue their service.

OMFS residents Border and Nielsen land education grant from national association

Michael Border, DDS, MD, six-year resident and Erik Nielsen DDS, MD chief resident in Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery submitted their case paper findings to OMS National Insurance Company which was chosen to receive a $1,000 education grant.

The case titled “Pathologic Mandibular Fracture Following Incomplete Coronectomy” will be published and appear on the OMSNIC website. The case sought to emphasize surgical principles crucial in the repair of a mandible fracture following a routine dentoalveolar procedure completed at an outside facility before being referred to VUMC for assessment and management. The educational grant awarded will benefit the Vanderbilt OMFS residency program in supporting various resident educational activities.

Vanderbilt represented well at recent TNACS annual meeting

Vanderbilt faculty, residents, students and alumni were well represented at the annual Tennessee American College of Surgeons meeting in August. Pictured from left to right: Kamran Idrees, past student, Chelsea Ison, Mary Hooks, Kyla Terhune, Carmen Solórzano, Kayla Kumm, Christina Bailey, Paula Smith, Pranit Chotai, Harold Lovvorn, John Tarpley, Tyler Zorn, and Parker Evans.
NEW FACULTY

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY
Associate Professor of Surgery
Ryan Splittgerber, PhD

DIVISION OF GENERAL SURGERY
Assistant in Surgery
Lisa Truett, RN, MSN, ACNP-BC

Instructor in Clinical Surgery
Jingliang Yan, MD, PhD

Assistant Professor of Surgery
Joseph Broucek, MD
Meredith Duke, MD, MBA

DIVISION OF SURGICAL ONCOLOGY & ENDOCRINE
Assistant in Surgery
Katherine Sibler, RN, MSN, ACNP

Instructor in Clinical Surgery
Yitian Liu, MD

DIVISION OF TRAUMA & SURGICAL CRITICAL CARE
Instructor in Clinical Surgery
Robel Beyene, MD
Christopher Guidry, MD
Luis Suarez Rodriguez, MD
Michael Smith, MD

Assistant Professor of Surgery
Stephen Gondek, MD, MPH

DIVISION OF VASCULAR SURGERY
Professor of Surgery
Patrick Stone, MD

DEPARTMENT OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY
Instructor in Clinical Neurological Surgery
Ameet Chitale, MD
David Ferrone, MD

Assistant Professor of Neurological Surgery
Ross Dawkins, MD

DEPARTMENT OF PLASTIC SURGERY
Assistant in Plastic Surgery
Erin Campbell, RN, MSN, A-G ACNP-BC

Assistant Professor of Plastic Surgery
Megan Vucovich, MD

DEPARTMENT OF THORACIC SURGERY
Associate Professor of Thoracic Surgery and Cardiac Surgery
Matthew Bacchetta, MD, MBA, MA

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRIC SURGERY
Associate Professor of Pediatric Surgery and Surgery
Eric Hansen, MD, MPH

Professor of Pediatric Surgery and Pediatrics
Martin Blakely, MD, MS

DEPARTMENT OF PLASTIC SURGERY
Professor of Plastic Surgery, Emerita
Lillian Nanney, PhD

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY
Professor of Surgery
A. Scott Pearson, MD

Fall Lectures 2018 for Section Departments and Divisions

L.W. Edwards Lecture
Department of Surgery
October 12, 2018, Nita Ahuja, MD, MBA

Holcomb Lecture
Department of Pediatric Surgery
October 26, 2018, Daniel von Allmen, MD

Rollin Daniels Lecture
Alternate years Division of Adult and Pediatric Cardiac Surgery and the Department of Thoracic Surgery
November 16, 2018, David R. Jones, MD