



# THE FELLOWSHIP

The Newsletter of the **FOUNDATION** for **SURGICAL FELLOWSHIPS**



Summer 2012

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## FSF Board Member Highlight: From Fellow to Fellowship Foundation Board

Harmik Soukiasian, MD, FACS



Dr. Harmik Soukiasian

Dr. Soukiasian is currently serving as the Associate Director of Thoracic Surgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. Despite the considerable demands of his position, when asked to become a board member for the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships, he enthusiastically accepted. Ever mindful of the value of his own fellowship training several years earlier, Dr. Soukiasian welcomed the opportunity to participate on the FSF board as a way of expressing his gratitude to the philanthropic donors who made that training possible. The advanced surgical training he received during his fellowship was instrumental in his professional development as a surgeon and he is now determined to help preserve that same opportunity for the next generation of physicians to follow.

After completing his cardiothoracic residency, Dr. Soukiasian felt the need for further specialized training. To build his expertise in the field of esophageal and foregut surgery, he trained under Dr. Luketich, one of the pioneers of minimally invasive esophageal surgery, at the University of Pittsburgh, Heart, Lung and Esophageal Surgery Institute. In this program, now proudly funded by FSF, Dr. Soukiasian completed a minimally invasive, esophageal and thoracic fellowship, concentrating on minimally invasive treatment of both esophageal oncology and benign esophageal disease. He was also trained in minimally invasive esophagectomy. For further specialized training in the field of minimally invasive thoracic surgery, he was awarded a second fellowship concentrating on VATS Lobectomy and other minimally invasive thoracic operations with Dr. Robert McKenna at Cedars-Sinai's Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery – another renowned program now proudly funded by FSF.

With confidence and appreciation, Dr. Soukiasian says that the hands-on surgical training he received from both fellowships – in and out of the operating room – provided him with the invaluable tools he needed to build a stellar career in thoracic medicine.

"I am honored to now be able to give back to future fellows and patients by helping to expand the efforts of the newly-founded FSF," says Soukiasian. "The training opportunities offered by FSF will ultimately result in better and safer patient care. I am so very proud to be part of this mission and I hope others will join us in these efforts."

*Help us turn today's innovation into tomorrow's life-saving patient care by donating so we can keep training Fellows!*

For more information on giving to the Foundation, contact the office at 310.424.3332, ext. 117 or email info@surgicalfellowships.org.

## Recognizing Partners: We Commit to Fellowship Training!

Gifts given as of 7-26-12

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For more information on the FSF or to get involved, please visit the FSF website at [www.surgicalfellowships.org](http://www.surgicalfellowships.org) or contact the Executive Director, Adeena Bleich at 310.424.3332, ext. 141.

## Recognizing Partners at the Meet and Mingle Event March 2012



Dr. Steigmann presents award to Angela Saulino and Matt Fahy from Covidien



Dr. Steigmann presents award to David Venner and Dr. Pam Martin from Ethicon Endo-Surgery



## Enhancing the Quality & Future of Healthcare

### Fellow Testimonial

Andre Teixeira, MD, Cleveland Clinic Florida

I had the honor and privilege of being a member of the first fully funded fellowship class of 2011-2012. It was my good fortune to be trained under the guidance of Dr. Rosenthal, whose program was structured under The Fellowship Council guidelines for a wide range of pathology and patient care. FSF and The Fellowship Council have infused our surgical society with a new spirit of professionalism. The FSF provides fellows the priceless opportunity to be trained under strict guidelines by the most innovative programs in the country. I can safely say that my surgical skills and my ability to deliver the best patient care possible have both been greatly enhanced, due in large part to the joint efforts of these organizations.



Andre Teixeira, MD

## RECOGNIZING PARTNERS: Fellowship Council

### Leading the Way for Fellowship Training

The Fellowship Council is the supervisory association of non-ACGME fellowship program directors in the field of gastrointestinal surgery. The Council was established to ensure equitable access and high educational standards for surgeons in training as well as those merely interested in this field. The Fellowship Council accomplishes its mission through an *application, match and accreditation process*. The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships (FSF) was established by The Fellowship Council to fund these high quality fellowships and support the availability of postgraduate surgical training. Theirs is a shared mission; to improve patient health and safety through education and training.



Dr. Greg Steigmann, FSF President presenting an award to The Fellowship Council for their financial support. Accepting the award is Dr. Bruce Schirmer, past president of The Fellowship Council

By supporting the Foundation, the Council is dedicated to promoting the education of future G.I. surgeons “who seek exposure to an environment that will provide experience in surgical management of complex surgical problems, including mastery of specialized surgical skills.”<sup>1</sup> Keeping the Foundation well funded and thriving guarantees that opportunities will continue to remain plentiful for the next generation of gastrointestinal surgeons who want to improve and refine their skills, and develop and nurture their careers – with the ultimate goal, of course, improved patient care and well-being.

The Fellowship Council was recently recognized for its support and leadership of the Foundation during the annual *FSF Meet and Mingle with the Minds of Advanced Surgery* in March 2012. Sharing honors with other FSF supporters – Ethicon Endo-Surgery and Covidien – The Fellowship Council was presented with an award for their loyal partnership. As over 100 of the Foundation’s first class of funded Fellows looked on, Dr. Steigmann, President of FSF, voiced his appreciation: “If not for The Fellowship Council championing the cause and importance of the need for the FSF. We would not be where we are today.”

The FSF leadership is proud of its ongoing partnership with the Council and anticipates a productive future as together we work tirelessly to expand the reach of our shared – and critically important – educational mission.

<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Fellowship Council Accredited Fellowships in Surgery

## Mission Statement

The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships exists to fund high quality fellowships in various areas of surgery, including but not limited to flexible endoscopy, minimal access surgery, and other related disciplines. Through a blinded application and review process, the Foundation will identify and distribute funds to qualified organizations based on criteria of excellence. The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships will promote and support the continued availability of postgraduate surgical training opportunities of the highest quality.



## Leveraging Next Generation Technologies for Better Patient Care

### Fellow Testimonial

Lane A. Ritter, MD, University of Virginia Health System



Lana A. Ritter, MD

“Invaluable.”

That is the word I would choose to describe my year in fellowship. Although I completed a very comprehensive general surgery residency, I felt that my program, like many others, was still building up its curriculum in advanced minimally invasive surgery. I wanted the extra edge in both my credentials and my confidence that an additional year of training offered.

Not only did my fellowship provide the focused opportunity to improve my skills in laparoscopic surgery, it also offered the chance to begin my role as an attending surgeon as I took residents through cases and ran my own practice as a Clinical Instructor. Additionally, I believe

that this year of training definitely made me more marketable as I started my job search because many general surgery practices are recruiting young surgeons with advanced laparoscopic experience. I am grateful for my mentors who always treated me as a colleague and partner. The Minimally Invasive Surgery fellowship funded by the FSF certainly helped jump-start my career and gave me skills to adopt innovative advanced procedures that can provide a higher level of patient care and safety.

## Vision Statement

The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships (FSF) envisions a surgical community that is better educated in advanced surgery with the ultimate goal of improved patient care.

## RECOGNIZING PARTNERS: Karl Storz-EndoSkope

### A Legacy of Supporting Innovation and Patient Care

Karl Storz Endoscopy-America (KSEA), Inc., a global leader in endoscopy products and solutions for operating room integration, announced that it will be providing a \$125,000 grant to support a clinical fellowship in advanced surgery through the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships (FSF).



In the more than half century since it was founded in 1945, the KARL STORZ company has written a significant chapter of medical and technological history. Karl Storz had an inspired, creative vision and an unyielding dedication that manifested dozens of pioneering discoveries and inventions that for years have helped define the field of minimally invasive surgery. STORZ's partnership with FSF is a natural extension of that creative vision.

KARL STORZ has an enduring legacy of supporting a broad range of programs that enhance the quality of healthcare available to patients. We recognize that supporting innovation in advanced medical and surgical technologies is not enough. We also have an obligation to make available educational opportunities in the latest minimally invasive surgical techniques. Preparing the surgeon to exploit our technology is an essential element to enhancing patient care and well-being. We are proud to be making a difference in this regard, by empowering promising postgraduate candidates with the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the exceptional surgical training programs provided by FSF. —Ali Amiri, Vice President, Marketing and Product Development, KARL STORZ Endoscopy-America, Inc.

It stands to reason that ever-evolving surgical innovation demands that training opportunities keep pace with the technological advancements. The trend of relentless progress continues unabated and the development of technologies even less invasive than those of today is inevitable. Patients will not receive the benefit of newly created life-saving procedures unless their surgeons have the opportunity to train on these techniques and master them.

“Giving surgeons the means and the confidence to pursue state-of-the-art training is vital to the advancement of patient care and safety,” said Adeena Bleich, Executive Director of the FSF. “We couldn’t be more excited and thankful to have KSEA partnering with us in this work.”

## From the President: A Year of FSF Fellowship

Greg Stiegmann, MD



Dr. Greg Stiegmann

We are very pleased with the growth that has taken place in the short life of the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships. I am proud to see the first group of Fellows funded by the FSF finish this inaugural year. Only a few short years ago, the need for an independent funding source, free of the traditional conflict of interest issues was envisioned. A group of leaders, with the Fellowship Council at the helm, stepped up to the plate to take a seemingly implausible idea forward and create what is now the FSF.

In just under three years, their hard work and that of the FSF Board of Directors paid off, as some 150 surgeons are now better trained to provide high level advanced surgical procedures to patients nationwide and beyond. One of these fellows, Matthew Lin, M.D., who completed this past year of fellowship training at the UCSF, has made a significant contribution into research involving the use of laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy (to read the full story go to: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Wellness/bariatric-surgery-weight-loss/story?id=16606159>). Dr. Lin's innovation is just one of the examples of how the training opportunities sponsored by our Foundation are opening the door to next generation technologies that lead to better and safer patient care and recovery time.

Please join me in congratulating the FSF funded 2012 fellows and program directors on completing their year of fellowship. With anticipation we all look forward to seeing this group of fellows and those to follow, advance the vision of the Foundation for many more years to come.

## FSF Board of Directors

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Greg Stiegmann, MD

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Harvey Sugerman, MD

Richard Satava, MD

J. Kelly Wright Jr., MD



Top row from left: Jonathan Sackier, Anthony Senagore, Ravi Chari, Dennis Fowler, Greg Stiegmann, Andrew Resnick, Bruce Wolff, Richard Satava. Bottom row from left: Kenneth Forde, Thomas D'Amico, J. Patrick O'Leary, Edward Felix, Harvey Sugerman, Thomas Dent, Donald Risucci. Harmik Soukiasian, MD and J. Kelly Wright Jr., MD not pictured

## Meet & Mingle 2012

Close to 150 FSF Fellows and Program Directors in the first group of fellows to be funded by the FSF joined together on March 8, 2012 to honor the donors and founding leaders of the FSF and to celebrate the achievements of the fellows as they concluded their year of advanced surgical fellowship training.



FSF Fellows enjoying the Meet and Mingle Event



FSF President Dr. Stiegmann and 2012 Fellows

## SAVE-THE-DATE Meet and Mingle with the Minds of Advanced Surgery

April 19, 2013

Baltimore Convention Center during SAGES  
Surgical Spring Week.

Please join The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships, the Fellowship Council, and the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons for a reception and presentation celebrating the importance of Advanced Surgical training.

For more information, please contact the Foundation at 310.424.3332.

By Invitation Only. More Information to Follow.