



# UNC Department of Anesthesiology

## *Winter 2023*

## *Diversity Newsletter*

Enjoy this quarterly newsletter celebrating the diversity of UNC Anesthesiology, the University of North Carolina, and the community and world. This newsletter aims to keep UNC Anesthesiology and other readers informed on our latest diversity-related news, events and trainings of interest.



### Spotlight: Q&A with CA-3 Dr. Jacob Shaffer

#### A Resident's Experience with UNC Anesthesia Global Health

In late August to mid-September 2022, **CA-3 Jacob Shaffer, MD**, (JS) participated in UNC's Global Anesthesia Program in Lilongwe, Malawi, a highly under-resourced area of the world. In January (2023), Dr. Shaffer sat down for a virtual chat with Anesthesiology DEI Committee Members **Shanna Weaver, CRNA**, (SW) and **Skye Margolies, PhD** (SM). Shanna has traveled to Nicaragua and The Dominican Republic with two UNC School of Medicine volunteer teams (Orthopaedics and Plastic Surgery) as an anesthesia care provider. Below are excerpts from this fun conversation on culture, respect, and service.

**JS:** Thank you both for having me. I've been looking forward to this opportunity. My name is Jake Shaffer and I'm a CA-3 from Cincinnati, Ohio. I transitioned to North Carolina [for residency] and will be staying in the state [post-residency]. My wife Elizabeth and I have two children, Will and Ansley. She went with me for part [of my Malawi trip].

During [the CVD-19 pandemic], UNC Anesthesiology didn't send [faculty or residents] to Malawi. The program was under the radar. I think I was the only one to apply [for AY 2021-2022]. My trip was life-changing. Professionally, it enforced my outlook and gave me the perspective I was looking for.

My wife felt similarly traveling to an under-resourced country outside of the U.S. medical realm.

**SW:** Some background on UNC Global Anesthesia Malawi program: UNC Anesthesiology members have participated in UNC School of Medicine (SOM)'s UNC Project-Malawi for 15 to 20 years . [UNC Professor



of Surgery] Dr. Anthony Charles was influential in founding UNC Project-Malawi, and UNC Anesthesiology partnered with the effort around 10 years ago. [UNC SOM] partners with Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH) in Lilongwe, Malawi's capital city of 1 - 1.5 million people. This hospital serves as the tertiary hospital in a very poor country with very few doctors.

**JS:** It helped me to [work at] the equivalent of UNC Hospitals in our country. As one of the biggest two or three hospitals in Malawi, [[KCH] and UNC Hospitals have very different capabilities. Perspective was a recurring theme for me throughout this trip. KCH is half outdoors and doesn't have [hospital] regulations like those in the U.S. Families were in the hallways, somewhat like a WWII setup of beds in one large room. With no privacy, people got to know each other well.

Those waiting to be seen showed a lot of teamwork, helping feed each other and doing whatever was needed. How they lived inside [KCH] seemed to mirror their way of life outside the hospital, kind of like a community-oriented extension of it.

**SW:** I echo that sentiment of community, family and all together taking care of each other. I've done several mission trips, and I was surprised like you described to see a big room with everyone close together. I wondered, 'Where's the privacy?' ... 'How do you sleep?'

Walk us through a what a typical day was like while you were [at KCH], including your time in didactics and when you were in the [SIM/simulation learning] lab].

**JS:** Every day started around 7 AM. The night team had a morning sign-out and would tell us about overnight cases. We discussed patient medications and what was available. After morning sign-out, [the team] branched out in an OR of about 30 trainees, where one to two were assigned to a senior clinical officer. Trainees then branched off to 6 - 8 main ORs, some OB ORs, and a small 5 - 6 bed ICU, rotating among these different areas.



Around 1 PM, a group would leave to participate in didactics and simulation lab learning.

One of our main goals was to teach. We tried to make it as interactive as possible over 2 - 3 hours of teaching after administering hands-on anesthesia for the first half of the day.

**SW:** Were you teaching senior officers or everyone? Did you teach anesthesia basics or specialty [training]?

**JS:** We did a little of everything, teaching basic anesthesia to some [lesser-trained] students, as well as expertise and advanced nuances beyond anesthesia foundations to the senior clinical officers. Helping them [learn], not, 'Hey, I need to teach you,' was what worked. Once we built trust within a teamwork atmosphere, we helped seniors officers learn through a QI approach in areas we could respectively guide. We could guide and voice changes [in the OR] that potentially needed to be made. Outside of the classroom, it was more structured in areas like difficult airways and malignant hyperthermia.

**SW:** What other challenges do you feel you had to overcome or endure during this trip/project?

**JS:** Over a month-long trip, there's an [early] period of, 'Hey, who are you?' from [our KCH colleagues] who needed to get to know and warm up to us. Trust was big, and showing up with a servant's mentality was important.

Another big takeaway was recognizing you must realize your resources. Whether you're [at UNC Hospitals] or [KCH], you need to recognize the resources around you to practice medicine successfully. The first week of figuring out what those resources were [at KCH], it dictated how [we] practiced.

**SW:** Anything you learned that will help you in the last six months of residency, or once you're in practice as an attending? What about this trip made you say, 'I'm going to incorporate this in my future practice.'?

**JS:** Some tenets of safety in anesthesia care are foundational and important. Clinging to those foundational tenets [lets you] learn to be a little more flexible about how things can get done. Things flowed differently because there were not the same regulations, which is potentially dangerous if certain things aren't in place. [You must have] a clear idea of what you need for absolute safety and what you can't budge from and where you can be a little more flexible in how you approach the case.

**SW:** Did you find that there were major cultural differences over there?

**JS:** There certainly were. We are friendly, but [in Lilongwe], they were very friendly people in a different sense of close community. They live very close to each other in the villages. Talking to some of the locals, [I noticed] how they lived and interacted was very close knit. That was a big cultural difference. We tend to be isolated in whatever we do. They depend very much on the town and the people around them.

**SW:** A light-hearted question: What is something new that you tried, food-wise or experience-wise, that you have never done before this trip? Like did you eat goat for the first time? It's huge in Africa.

**JS:** I had never tried goat before, and there was a goat roast to welcome the people by the compound we were living on. They are very appreciative and proud of the UNC project.



**JS:** At a small school/orphanage, they make these amazing, intricate crafts where the proceeds benefit the children. We brought back an elephant made of wire and beads. In Malawi, they really care about the elephant, and [the elephant's] nose up is a symbol of happiness and joy.

The only time I felt unsafe in the country (besides some on roads) was when we hired a driver to take us out of the area on safari. A mother elephant with her baby saw our vehicle and watched us while the baby walked. She was facing us down with a look of, 'I'm going to step on [your] car and do what I need to do.'

**SW:** Any advice for future [UNC Anesthesiology] residents who are thinking about this experience? Would you say, 'It was great, it changed my life, definitely sign up!'?

**JS:** Yes. You are well taken care of and are safe, but I wouldn't go there necessarily expecting [to make] this experience be comfortable. [Arrive with a servant's humble approach], ready to serve and to learn a lot. Then dive into the culture, the people, and everything around you. It's so different than America. It's outside of learning anesthesia. Get to know the fascinating culture that you get to be around for a month.

**SW:** Have you and your wife determined if you want to do this in the future, maybe straight out of residency? Or is it more, 'We've done it but don't want to do it again, or maybe try something different.'



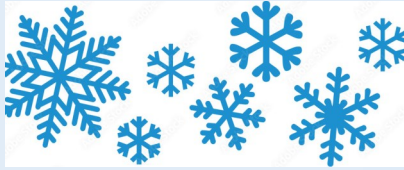
**JS:** [This trip] had a lot of meaning. It's easy to go to work every day to make a good living and come home. When you are around [Malawi citizens] who have so little, there's a passion that's hard to quell. My wife has worked so hard at her job in raising our kids throughout residency. Combining what we've done in our medical backgrounds with our faith makes it very meaningful. This trip proved if we get the calling to [serve in medical missions], we need to listen to it.

**SW:** [In the U.S.], even our poorest patients know [healthcare] is going to be provided. Sometimes with [workflow], that can feel rushed. However, with [global health] projects, every single patient is so appreciative of the little things you do. You think, 'Oh, I did nothing big, I'm just doing my job.' [In Malawi], getting great care brings tears to their eyes. It's so humbling. You come back and think about all the things you complain about. It's a big perspective on life [to be around] people who have so little but are so happy.

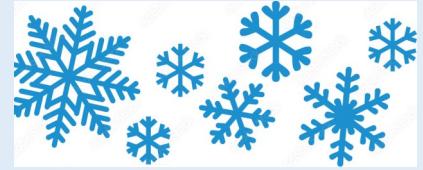
**JS:** One thing that confirms what I saw before the trip and afterwards is there is a big difference between joy and happiness. One is circumstantial and one is not. The joy I saw from these people did not depend on circumstance. It's a lesson that affirmed me.

My time in Malawi was amazing. Dr. [Janey] Phelps works really hard on [UNC Anesthesia Global Health]. This was probably the best time I've had in my residency at UNC. I appreciate the chance to talk about it.





## *Winter 2023 Observances*



### **January**

**January 6** – Feast of the Epiphany: this Christian feast day celebrates the star leading the three wise men to baby Jesus closing the Christmas season

**January 15** – Makar Sankranti: Hindu festival dedicated to the god of the sun, Surya

**January 16** – Martin Luther King Jr. Day: celebrates one of the best-known civil rights activists, MLK Jr. ([UNC MLK Week of Celebration](#))

**January 22** – Lunar New Year: this festival marks the start of the new year in the lunar calendar used in East Asia, Southeast Asia and elsewhere

**January 27** – International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust: a United Nations holiday that remembers the approximately 6 million Jews murdered during World War II

### **February**

**February 15** – Nirvana Day: an annual festival that remembers the death of the Buddha after reaching nirvana; also called Parinirvana

**February 15** – Susan B. Anthony's Birthday: a leader of the women's suffrage movement, she advocated for abolition, temperance, labor rights, and equal pay for equal work

**February 22** – Ash Wednesday: a day of prayer and fasting that begins the Christian season of Lent

### **March**

**March 8<sup>th</sup>** – International Women's Day: A day highlighting the political, social, cultural, and economic achievements of women

**March 8<sup>th</sup>** – Holi: Hindu holiday that celebrates the winter harvest and onset of spring

**March 10** – Harriet Tubman's birthday (observed): American abolitionist who is well-known for her key role in the Underground Railroad

**March 17** – St. Patrick's Day: feast day of a Catholic saint who inspires cultural and religious celebrations around the world

**March 21** – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**March 22 to April 21** – Ramadan: the start of Islam's sacred month — during this time Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until dusk

# ***FEBRUARY 2023***



February marks a month-long celebration of the history, culture, influence and achievements of African-Americans who have transformed UNC - Chapel Hill and the world around them. Many events are scheduled at the University of North Carolina and around the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community to celebrate Black History Month.

## CAMPUS

[UNC Athletics](#)

[Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History](#)

## COMMUNITY

[NC Triangle area](#)

[2023 NC Black Heritage Festival](#)

## EVENTS

### **Genna Rae McNeil Black History Month Lecture**

Harvard University Professor of American History & African-American Studies (University-wide [RSVP](#))

### **Mardi Gras at Durham Central Park: Saturday, February 18th (2 - 7 PM)**

Come out to the DCP Pavilion for an event that welcomes local Krewes and first-timers to a Bull City Mardi Gras celebration with music from Bulltown Strutters and Cajammers. Kids can make a shoebox float, and adults can decorate their hats or costumes.



**Quiz:** *What U.S. President established Black History Month as an annually celebrated recognition of African-American contributions to U.S. history?*

- A) Lyndon B. Johnson (1967)
- B) Gerald Ford (1976)

- C) Ronald Reagan (1982)
- D) Bill Clinton (1994)



# MARCH 2023

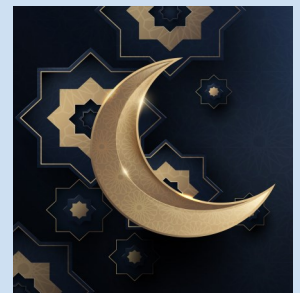


In March, we celebrate **Women's History Month** to honor the vital role of women across American society and history, as influencers, leaders and thinkers who have effected change and shaped the dialogue in the world around them. In March, discover notable women who have helped shape the history of the [University of North Carolina](#) and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community history. In 1897, six female students became the first women to join an all-male class of entering undergraduates. Visit "[Women in the History of UNC](#)." Learn more on the impact women have made over 125 years at the University of North Carolina.



## **Ramadan 2023: March 22nd through April 21st**

**Ramadan** is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar year and commemorates the prophet Muhammad's first revelation. Muslims observe Ramadan worldwide as a month of fasting (*sawm*), prayer, reflection and coming together. Lasting 29 - 30 days, Ramadan is annually observed from one sighting of the crescent moon to the next. It is regarded as one of the **Five Pillars of Islam**.



**Quiz:** What Silver Screen actress was nicknamed "the mother of Wi-Fi" and inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame for creating frequency hopping technology?

A) Ava Gardner  
B) Hedy Lamarr

C) Rita Hayworth  
D) Greta Garbo



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# TRAININGS & LECTURES



## NIH Director's Wednesday Afternoon Lecture Series (WALS)

WALS keeps NIH researchers abreast of current, groundbreaking research across the globe

**February 8, 2023 (2 - 3 PM)**

***Community-Engaged Approaches for Preventing and Controlling Obesity Among U.S. Latinos/Hispanics.***

**Guadalupe Xochitl Ayala, PhD** (Professor)  
San Diego State University Division of Health Promotion and Behavioral  
Science School of Public Health



UNC

SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE

### DEI TRAININGS

**January 31st:** "Unconscious Bias" (9:30 am - 12:00 pm) **Zoom:** To register, click [here](#).  
**February 2nd:** "Respecting All" (9:00 am - 12:00 pm) **Zoom:** To register, click [here](#).  
**March 6th:** Racial Justice Workshop **Zoom:** To register, click [here](#).  
**March 9th:** "Unconscious Bias" **Zoom:** To register, click [here](#).

### DEI CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The **DEI Certificate Program** is an initiative of the UNC SOM Office of Inclusive Excellence in support of the 2019 SOM Strategic Plan to foster an inclusive workplace environment. The curriculum offers workshops and trainings designed to broaden awareness of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion topics among the SOM faculty/staff and deepen engagement with and between individuals in the SOM at all levels – from patients to leadership. The workshops offered as part of the certificate program address a broad array of DEI topics, including those related to race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, culture and religion, socioeconomic status, and more. To learn more about this program, click [here](#).



# UNC Department of Anesthesiology DEI Committee Members



Lauren Andrews	David Flynn	Duncan McLean
Annika Barnett	Amy Goetzinger	Kim Nichols
Hemanth Baboolal	Christinna Haire	Seema Patidar
Laurie Birdsong	Lynn Harris	Emily Robertson
Sam Blacker	Caryn Hertz	David Sender
Robin Brennan	Mia Kang	Joseph Sisk
Fei Chen	My Liu	Sally Stander
Kelly Cunningham	Andy Lobonc	Adam Suchar
Vishal Dhanda	Elisa Lund	Eva Waller
Alexander Doyal	Skye Margolies	Shanna Weaver

*Interested in joining your colleagues & getting involved?  
There are many ways to contribute & make a difference!!*

**[Anes\\_diversity@med.unc.edu](mailto:Anes_diversity@med.unc.edu)**

[Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: UNC Department of Anesthesiology](#)