

# UNC SURGERY

SUMMER 2020





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SUMMER NEWSLETTER DATES: May, June,  
and July of 2020

## UNC DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

### Chair

Melina Kibbe, MD

### Vice Chairs

David A. Gerber, MD  
Timothy M. Farrell, MD  
Jin Ra, MD  
Jen Jen Yeh, MD  
Hong Jin Kim, MD

*Clinical Affairs  
Education  
Quality and Safety  
Research  
Strategy & Outreach*

### Division Chiefs

David A. Gerber, MD  
Booker T. King, MD  
John S. Ikonomidis, MD, PhD  
Jose G. Guillem, MD, MPH, MBA  
Anthony G. Charles, MD, MPH  
Andrea Hayes-Jordan, MD  
Lynn A. Damitz, MD  
Hong Jin Kim, MD  
Mark Farber, MD

*Abdominal Transplant Surgery  
NC Jaycee Burn Center Surgery  
Cardiothoracic Surgery  
Gastrointestinal Surgery  
General & Acute Care Surgery  
Pediatric Surgery  
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery  
Surgical Oncology  
Vascular Surgery*

### Directors

Luigi Pascarella, MD  
David W. Ollila, MD

*Medical Student Clerkship  
Mentorship Program*

### Residency Program Directors

Benjamin E. Haithcock, MD  
Michael O. Meyers, MD  
Jeyhan S. Wood, MD  
Ezequiel Parodi, MD

*Cardiothoracic Surgery  
General Surgery  
Plastic Surgery  
Vascular Surgery*

### Fellowship Program Directors

David A. Gerber, MD  
Timothy M. Farrell, MD

Felicia Williams, MD  
Jin Ra, MD  
David W. Ollila, MD  
Ezequiel Parodi, MD

*Abdominal Transplant Surgery  
Adv. Minimally Invasive  
and Bariatric Surgery  
Burn Surgery  
Critical Care Surgery  
Complex General Surgical Oncology  
Vascular Surgery*

### Associate Chair for Administration

Joellen Buckio, MHA

### Public Communications Specialist

Sheerah Coe

On the cover: George Floyd nine minutes of silence June 9th event.  
Photo by Sheerah Coe.

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"Healthcare Hero," by the Denver-based artist Austin Zucchini-Fowler. Photo credit Austin Zucchini-Fowler



# by the numbers

*\*Research + Publication data from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020*



75

FACULTY

53

ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS

89

TRAINEES

224

PUBLICATIONS

78

STAFF

\$801,924

CLINICAL TRIAL DOLLARS

\$4,177,445

FEDERAL GRANT DOLLARS

50

RESEARCHERS



72

GRANT SUBMISSIONS

\$4,938,977

TOTAL RESEARCH GRANT DOLLARS

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On October 7, it will be my honor to give the annual State of the Department Address. This tradition is a yearly benchmark and celebration of our collective success, a review that will help keep us on track toward our ultimate goal of becoming the nation's leading public Department of Surgery. Yet even as I prepare for this address, knowing the scope of our many achievements, what cannot escape me is how drastically the pandemic has altered our surgical services, research, and education initiatives. What gives me pause is the realization that the context of the landscape has changed our paradigm and so we, too, must change the way we engage in the world – a daunting but exciting proposition.

Clinically, our surgeons have risen to the challenge to provide the highest quality care to the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. Surgical activity has been critical to supporting the UNC Medical Center during the time of COVID. Even though our caseload is back to pre-pandemic levels, we are still dealing with the direct impact this crisis has had on our healthcare system. We have increased our outreach efforts to reassure patients about workplace safety and are changing how we connect, conducting virtual visits whenever possible. Our workforce is adapting to rotating schedules and remote meetings to expand capacity, and everyone is learning new skills to cover the gaps. New protocols are evolving alongside our clinical practices to accommodate new guidelines. Despite all of this flux and uncertainty, we continue to provide outstanding service, as evidenced by our recent Gold Excellence in Life Support (ELSO) Award for our Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) program.

Unfortunately, research has slowed in our labs. New social distancing rules have limited access to human participants and animal subjects, delaying some studies, suspending others. Clinical trials also face participation challenges. Data collection has been slow and challenging if personnel are not readily available. Given the rush of resources to develop a vaccine worldwide, less funding is available for other projects. Still, our department continues to boast success in innovative and groundbreaking research such as Dr. Tom Egan's new NIH R21 award to explore novel ultrasound approaches for localizing pulmonary nodules during thoracic surgery. Ironically, with the travel ban, I have noticed an uptick in manuscript submissions and long-distance collaborations for many of our faculty, fellows, and residents. However, for those who have children, the task of homeschooling and childcare has created challenges never before encountered. We are grateful for the efforts of Dr. Shannelle Campbell, who is leading a task force to provide critical resources to members of the Department of

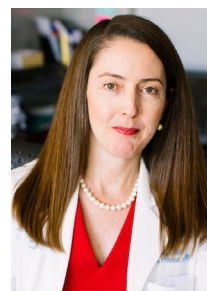
Surgery on how to manage these childcare needs.

As the pandemic has taken many of our regular in-person activities off the schedule, we continue to learn creative ways to provide quality education, slowly mastering the art of distance learning and understanding the importance of lighting and clean backgrounds, as well as establishing a charismatic camera presence. Recently, we hosted communication experts to build up our relational and team skills virtually, hosting sessions such as "Telling Stories for Greater Connection" with Jeffrey Polish, PhD, consultant and executive director of The Monti, and "It's All in the Delivery" with Anthony Orsini, DO, physician and president of The Orsini Way. These speakers have provided valuable tools and tips to increase our effectiveness as educators and surgeons, as well as train the next generation of surgical health care professionals and scientists. Our trainees are pioneers in this new way of learning and I am extremely proud of the way they are navigating this new world.

I am also very pleased to welcome two new faculty members to the department: Dr. Shrunjay Patel, Assistant Professor of Vascular Surgery and Dr. Randal Zhou, Assistant Professor of Gastrointestinal Surgery. Dr. Patel brings advanced foot and ankle care with a focus in diabetes research. Dr. Zhou will specialize in bariatric and hernia surgery with a focus on robotic surgery; his research interests include quality improvement and health outcomes. We are delighted to have these excellent surgeons join our team.

Lastly, we are excited to report that our state-of-the-art educational conference and meeting center on the 4th floor of Burnett-Womack is nearly complete! This final phase of renovation will integrate us with the future Surgical Tower and maximize our learning opportunities by providing plenty of teaching space and advanced technology. In the spirit of the times, please be sure to schedule a virtual tour when it opens!

Sincerely,



**Melina R. Kibbe, MD, FACS, FAHA**

**Colin G. Thomas Jr. Distinguished Professor and Chair**

Department of Surgery  
*Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering*  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

# ECMO PROGRAM WINS GOLD



Congratulations to the Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) program at UNC Medical Center. It has received the Gold level Award for Excellence in Life Support from the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization.

The ELSO Excellence in Life Support Award recognizes those centers worldwide that distinguish themselves by having processes, procedures, and systems in place that promote excellence and exceptional care.

ELSO's goal is to recognize and honor programs that reach the highest level of performance, innovation, and quality. The

ECMO program at UNC Medical Center achieved this honor by demonstrating excellence in patient care by using the highest quality measures, evidence-based processes, training, education, collaboration, and communication that contribute to a healing environment for families, patients, and staff.

The ELSO Award signifies to patients and families a commitment to exceptional patient care. It also demonstrates to the health care community an assurance of high-quality standards, specialized equipment and supplies, defined patient protocols, and advanced education of all staff members.



"The UNC ECMO Program is a team of physicians, surgeons, respiratory therapists, registered nurses, and perfusionists dedicated to providing ECMO support for infants, children, and adults experiencing acute cardiorespiratory failure. ECMO allows time for the patient's lungs or heart to heal over a period of time by using a heart-lung machine to oxygenate the blood outside the body."  
-Anne Anderson, BSN, RN, Pediatric ECMO Coordinator

"We are honored to be the recipient of such a prestigious award regarding the critical care services and life support equipment and training provided to our patients," said Anthony Charles, MD, MPH, Director of the UNC ECMO Program. "The Gold Excellence in Life Support Award recognizes those centers that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to evidence-based processes and quality measures, staff training, and continuing education, patient satisfaction and ongoing clinical care. The ECMO Center accomplishments reflect the dedication to advancing health care that we continuously strive to achieve at UNC."

# NINE MINUTES OF SILENCE



On May 25th, 2020, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest. The video footage shows arresting officers kneeling on his neck, effectively cutting off his airways. His death has sparked the current Black Lives Matter movement, setting into motion protests and calls for equality.

taking a moment from the chaos around them to join together. They knelt outside the front of UNC-Chapel Hill hospital, a line of health care workers, all masked due to COVID-19, all gathered together to show their support. The silence spoke, we hear you, and we kneel beside one another in this fight against racism.



On June 9th UNC Surgery held a memorial, nine minutes of silence in honor of George Floyd. The event was organized by Ivy Haskins, MD, a former minimally invasive GI fellow. The department felt that it was vital that we join in the display of solidarity seen on health care campuses across the country. Doctors, nurses, residents, fellows, and staff bowed their heads in silence,



# LIVING BREATHING PROOF

*A cadre of older patients with cystic fibrosis have defied the life expectancy associated with their illness. They're inspiring and educating others about surviving with the disease long-term.*

On July 29, 2020, [nature.com](https://www.nature.com) published a story written by Roxanne Khamisi about Howell Graham, who received a lung transplant at UNC Hospitals, and is now the longest-surviving lung transplant patient in the United States.

Today, at age 58, Howell Graham works as a real-estate appraiser and has been married to his wife for nearly 30 years. Graham is one of a group of individuals with cystic fibrosis who have defied the predictions of doctors and survived for decades with the disease.

In 1990, Howell Graham was the first cystic fibrosis patient to receive a lung transplant at UNC Hospitals. At that time, Graham was 28. His cystic fibrosis had progressed to the point that it was difficult to walk across a room. He knew

he couldn't go on living that way.

His surgeon, Thomas Egan, MD, MSc, is a Professor of Surgery in the UNC Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. He is a world-renowned surgeon and lung transplantation researcher.

At the time of Graham's surgery, cystic fibrosis patients were not considered good candidates for lung transplant. But a new technique for performing a double lung transplant had been developed. Egan determined that Graham was a good candidate.

All these years later, Graham, of Wilmington, still vividly remembers the moment he heard that a set of donor lungs might be available.

"Dr. Egan told me he was flying out to look at some lungs and I had all of these questions for him like 'What if your plane is delayed?' or 'What if there's a traffic jam?'"

"He looked at me and said 'Howell, it's like Greyhound, leave the driving to us.'"

Not a day goes by that Graham isn't thankful for the gift he received in 1990. And he's made it his mission to spread the word about the importance of organ donation. He knows he likely wouldn't be here without it.

"This portion of my life has been the best by far," he said. You can read more about [Graham's personal journey](#) or watch his video, [Grateful for every breath](#).

[You can read the full nature.com article.](#)

# GERBER AWARDED MEDAL

David A. Gerber, MD, George F. Sheldon, MD Distinguished Professor of Surgery and Chief of Abdominal Transplant Surgery at UNC Surgery was awarded the **Defense Meritorious Service Medal by the United States Secretary of Defense**. Congratulations to Dr. Gerber on this well-deserved honor.

"I am deeply moved and somewhat speechless to receive this tremendous honor," says Dr. Gerber. "I have had the fortune of serving in the U.S. Air Force for almost 30 years and the last decade has been incredibly rewarding as I was assigned

to the Uniformed Services University and Walter Reed National Medical Center. In this position, I was able to work closely with leadership in their Department of Surgery and provide a perspective that they have felt was valuable to their mission. Receiving the Defense Meritorious Service Medal has led me to a moment of introspection and reflection and leaves me humbled by those with whom I have worked."

David Gerber served as Colonel in the United States Air Force and has distinguished himself by meritorious service as General and Transplant Surgeon, Department of Surgery, Uniformed Services University (USU), from March 2009 to April 2020.

His letter of recommendation for the award details Dr. Gerber's extensive support and assistance to the USU and to Department of Defense (DoD) members. This includes providing critical Renal Transplant Surgery to members of the DoD as well as contributing directly to the success and growth of

the Walter Reed Army Medical Center Transplant Program.

As an invaluable member of the Department of Surgery, Colonel Gerber taught multiple Advanced Trauma Life Support courses to matriculating military medical students, advanced degree nursing students, and other military medical professionals which prepared them with the skills needed to save lives on the battlefield. To say he made an impact in the lives of others would be an understatement.

The distinctive accomplishments of Colonel Gerber culminated a distinguished career in the service of his country and reflect great credit upon himself, the United States Air Force Reserves, and the Department of Defense.

[Read the full article](#) detailing Dr. Gerber's dedication as Colonel in the United States Air Force Reserve, as a transplant surgeon, and as an educator.





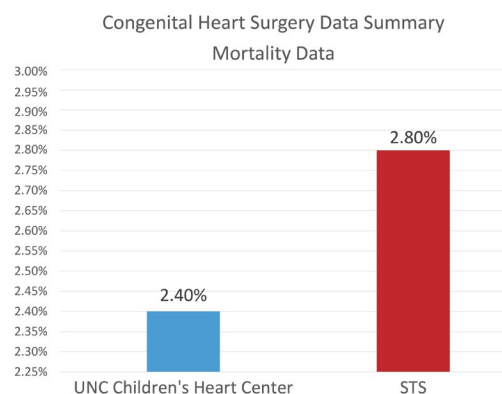
# UNC CHILDREN'S HEART CENTER

*Summer 2020 update on how far our program has come and how we continue to improve our service to the children and families of North Carolina.*



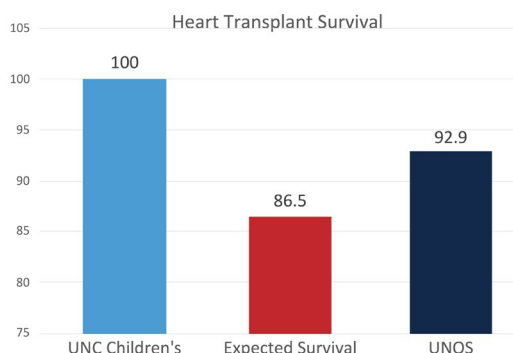
## Clinical Excellence

The resurgence of the congenital heart program has been fostered by the multidisciplinary team members who are the pillars of UNC Children's Heart Center. The program is rapidly becoming one of the premier pediatric cardiac surgery programs in the region. Since June of 2018, outcomes for all tiers of surgical complexity including STAT 5 cases (most complex) have been the best in our program's history with an overall mortality of 2.4%. As we benchmark our results against the aggregate data of the Society for Thoracic Surgeon's Congenital Heart Surgery Database, our outcomes are better than the national average.\* Since January 2020, our survival rate has continued to improve with over 98% of children surviving to hospital discharge despite taking on high risk lesions such as hypoplastic left heart syndrome, pulmonary atresia with multiple aortopulmonary collaterals (MAPCAs), and neonatal surgery in premature and low birth-weight babies.



[UNC data from 2018-2020 as compared to STS Congenital Heart Surgery Data Summary Spring 2019 Harvest.](#)

Our heart failure program continues to thrive. In the last year, we have supported several children with a ventricular assist device or "artificial heart" as they awaited heart transplantation. This is the first time since the inception of the Heart Failure Program at UNC that children have been able to wait for an organ while in the comfort of their homes. We are on pace to have the highest number of pediatric heart transplants in our recent past having performed six orthotopic cardiac transplants during this time which is more transplants than over the preceding five-year period. Despite this uptick, we maintain a 100% survival rate and graft survival at 1-year as compared to our expected survival of 85% and the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) national survival rate of 93%.



## Team Expansion

A highly interdependent team is critical to the success of our mission. As such, we have expanded our faculty and staff within the Heart Center including an additional board-certified congenital heart surgeon, Dr. Sandeep Sainathan. Dr. Sainathan joined us in May 2020 from LeBonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis, TN, a recognized center of excellence for congenital cardiac care. In addition, we have onboarded two advanced practice providers for the program. Jessica Floriano, MSN, RN, CPNP AC/PC, FNP-C joined in this summer from Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital in Cleveland, OH to serve as our cardiothoracic surgery advanced nurse practitioner. Lunise Benjamin, DNP, NP-C, joined us from UNC Cardiology as our doctoral-level advanced

practice provider in charge of spearheading our newly formed UNC Adult Congenital Heart Center. We are currently in the process of moving toward being one of a select number of centers accredited for Adult Congenital Heart Disease. Our pediatric ECMO team continues to expand. In 2018, we established a dedicated group of pediatric specialists including Anne Anderson, BSN, RN the first Clinical Lead ECMO Specialist at UNC and four practitioners including Wesley Searcy, RN BSN, (UNC), Chris Schisler, RCP, RRT-NPS, (UNC), Joy Cole-Sperry, RN, (The University of Texas-Houston/Memorial Hermann Children's Hospital), and Jennifer Scott, RN, (Emory University-Children's Hospital of Atlanta). In addition, we have established a new Section of Pediatric Cardiovascular Perfusion and hired UNC's first Chief of Pediatric Perfusion, Monica C. Olsen MHA/ED, CCP, FPP. Monica comes to us from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia-The University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine to work alongside our excellent perfusion team.

## Surgical Outreach

Our team has been "traveling the state" virtually and establishing new relationships with providers around North Carolina and the southeast. UNC is quickly becoming a regional referral center for complex cardiac surgery including procedures such as the pulmonary autograft or "[Ross procedure](#)." Read about [Bill Wild's Story](#).



Left to right: JP DaSilva, MD and Mahesh Sharma, MD.



In August, we were thrilled to host Professor Jose Pedro DaSilva, as a Visiting Surgeon. Dr. DaSilva, originally from São Paulo, Brazil, pioneered a procedure to treat [Ebstein's Anomaly of the tricuspid valve](#). Professor DaSilva delivered a lecture

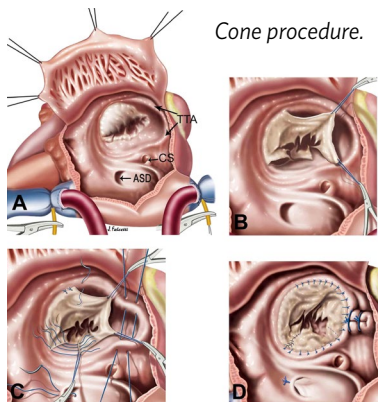


Image used with permission: JP DaSilva, MD.

at UNC entitled "Ebstein's Anomaly: The Clinical Impact of the Cone Technique." Additionally, Dr. Sharma, assisted by Dr. DaSilva, performed UNC's first "Cone Procedure" for Ebstein's anomaly of the tricuspid valve.

This summer, UNC Health signed an agreement with [Novant Health](#) and New Hanover Regional Medical Center to expand the existing medical education and pediatric specialty services in Southeastern North Carolina.

Our Heart Center team continues to expand its footprint to provide quaternary care for the children around the state.

### Research

In order to maintain our tripartite mission

as academic surgeons, we are in early stages of the establishment of a Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgical Laboratory at UNC. In collaboration with faculty from NC State School of Biomedical Engineering, we are testing the use of robotic fabric for cavopulmonary assistance in the Fontan circulation of single ventricle physiology.

Our clinical research efforts are directed at pediatric mechanical circulatory support options and using large databases such as KIDS HCUP to investigate questions such as the optimal timing of the superior cavopulmonary shunt (SCVPA) (Bidirectional Glenn operation/ Hemi-Fontan) particularly after a stage 1 single ventricle palliation (Norwood procedure).

# STORIES WITH CONNECTION

In his Grand Rounds session on August 8, 2020 Jeffrey Polish, PhD, discussed the topic of ["Telling Stories for Greater Connection \(...and better research talks\)."](#)

Jeffrey is the founder and CEO of The Monti, an organization that helps people learn how to tell stories, specifically how to tell their personal stories. He teaches Story Telling and Health at Duke University and his national business clients include Boeing, Microsoft, and Juniper Networks.

He began his talk by asking "What do you want to achieve by giving your talk?" Answers he received included: 1. Clearly and concisely present my work; 2. Come off as competent and professional; 3. Impress the Division Chief; 4. Turn people on to my research. He points out that three of the four answers have nothing to do with the audience, with the listener, with the relationship between speaker and listener. He believes that #4 is actually the most important answer, "When we are giving a talk we need to think about who we are talking to and how we are engaging with them."

"Your research talk is an opportunity to **engage** your listener from the very first minute, to make your work **relatable** in a way that a paper never could, and be **impactful**. When we stand and deliver our story we have an opportunity to inspire people by our human presence. The best research presentations I've ever seen answered



the question of 'why you've dedicated your life to studying xyz.'" He explains that the story provides context for the listener/reader to feel the significance of the work. We are emotional creatures who want to connect and we are intellectual, meaning we can learn from the talks and presentations but we need to be turned on by them, pulled in, and inspired.

In any story you need to use a three-act story structure. You create a narrative arc with a beginning, which is the why, that provides context, conflict, establishes what's at stake, and motivation. This is where the listener finds themselves.

In the middle, the what, is where the action or info of the story lies. It culminates in the one great finding, the climax, and is typically the longest part of the story.

The final part of the story is of course the ending, the meaning, where change is measured. "We have taken the field of research to a new place." We are finding the meaning of the story; moment of reflection occurs here as well as future directions.

A great communicator is a person who is engaging, relatable and impactful, who thinks about their audience before they get up on a stage to give their talk. Someone who cares about their audience, interacts with them in some way, lets us know what motivates him or her, makes us care and is authentic. Have you ever given a talk that connects with your audience as Jeff suggests?

## HIGHLIGHTS & HONORS FACULTY



**Thomas Egan, MD**

*Professor of Surgery, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Member, NIH Study Section ZHL1 CSR-R (01) NHLBI Outstanding Investigator Award (OIA), July 28-29, 2020*



**David Gerber, MD**

*Distinguished Professor of Surgery, Division of Abdominal Transplant, awarded Defense Meritorious Service Medal by the United States Secretary of Defense*

**José Guillem, MD**

*Chief and Professor, Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery, along with Garrett Friedman, MD from Mike O'Callaghan Federal Medical Center in Las Vegas, NV, published "Management of Hereditary Colorectal Cancer. A Multidisciplinary Approach"*



**Andrea Hayes-Jordan, MD**

*Professor and Chief, Division of Pediatric Surgery, was elected to American Pediatric Surgical Association Board of Directors*



**Philip Spanheimer, MD**

*Assistant Professor, Division of Surgical Oncology, won Junior Faculty Award from the Society of University Surgeons*



## FACULTY PROMOTIONS

**Jeyhan Wood, MD**

*Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery was promoted to Associate Professor*





## GRANTS & AWARDS FACULTY



**Robert Maile, PhD**

*Associate Professor of Surgery, Division of Burn Surgery, and Co-Director of The DELTA Translational Recharge Center has received \$500,000 of funding, through the N.C. Policy Collaboratory at UNC-Chapel Hill, to reinforce its COVID-19 research support and analysis infrastructure.*

*This initiative is currently supporting multiple COVID-19 studies, and comprises: 1) participant enrolment and clinical specimen collection via the Clinical Research Unit space in the Adams School of Dentistry, 2) BSL2+-housed clinical specimen processing for multiple IRB approved COVID-19 research studies, 3) using SOPs approved by EHS/IBC for processing of blood, saliva, lung fluids, nasal fluid, urine, stool, 4) analysis of inactivated samples for immunological, proteomic and metabolomic outcomes, and 5) biobanking of excess COVID-19 clinical specimen materials.*

*Born from a collaboration between the Adams Schools of Dentistry and the School of Medicine, the focus of the DELTA Translational Recharge Center is on kickstarting clinically-relevant research projects, aiding investigators in Discovery and Elucidation, Logistics, Translation and Application. [Read the full press release.](#)*

## HIGHLIGHTS & HONORS RESIDENTS, FELLOWS, & RESEARCHERS



**Arya Akhavan, MD**

*Resident, Plastic Surgery PGY5, elected Vice President of Quality Improvement in the House Staff Council for 2020 - 2021*



**Xavier Baldwin, MD**

*Research Resident, General Surgery, was accepted onto the Duke-UNC Immunotherapy T32, with Dr. Stephanie Downs-Canner acting as his mentor*

**Stephanie Gray, MD**

*Resident, General Surgery PGY5, recipient of The Class of 2000 Kaiser Permanente Excellence in Teaching Award. This award honors the residents deemed by the third year class to be the most outstanding in each of the seven core clerkships*



**Audrey Khoury, MD**

*Resident, Cardiothoracic Surgery, PGY2, recipient of the The Class of 2000 Kaiser Permanente Excellence in Teaching Award. This award honors the residents deemed by the third year class to be the most outstanding in each of the seven core clerkships*



**Ian Kratzke, MD**

*Resident, General Surgery PGY4, elected Vice President of Well-Being in the House Staff Council for 2020 - 2021*



*Resident Scavenger Hunt June 2020*



## NEW FACULTY



**Shrunjay Patel, DPM**  
*Assistant Professor*  
*Vascular Surgery*  
*Started 7/6/2020*

Dr. Patel received his undergraduate degree from Toronto's York University in 2011 before earning his medical degree at Rosalind Franklin University in 2015. He completed

his Reconstructive Foot and Ankle Surgery residency training at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, where he was Chief Resident. He then pursued a fellowship in Reconstructive, Trauma and Limb Salvage Foot and Ankle Surgery at the University of Texas, graduating in 2019. Since that time he has been employed by Carolina Foot and Ankle in Mooresville, North Carolina.

Dr. Patel has presented nationally and internationally on topics related to his specialty, and has published in podiatry journals. He maintains membership in his professional organizations and continues to hone his skills through specialized coursework. He is fluent in Hindi and Gujarati, and proficient in Medical Spanish, Punjabi and Urdu. Read more about Dr. Patel in his [interview](#).



**Randal Zhou, MD**  
*Assistant Professor*  
*Gastrointestinal Surgery*  
*Started 8/24/2020*

Dr. Zhou graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Science in Integrative Biology and a minor in Chemistry in 2010. He received his medical degree from

Rush Medical College in 2014. He remained at Rush for his general surgery residency training, which he completed in 2019. He then matriculated to Yale-New Haven Hospital for a fellowship in Minimally Invasive and Bariatric Surgery.

Dr. Zhou joins our department in the Division of GI Surgery as a bariatrics and hernia surgeon, with particular experience in robotic surgery. Dr. Zhou comes to UNC with experience in clinical outcomes research. He has presented his work at national and regional conferences, and has published in specialty journals. He maintains membership in his professional organizations and is part of a Bariatric Collaboration Society. He will be working closely with Drs. Farrell and Perez, along with all the faculty in the GI Division. Read more about Dr. Zhou in his [interview](#).



*Dr. HJ Kim, Ted. B. Seagroves Jr. Distinguished Professor of Surgery, Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology and Endocrine Surgery, performing surgery alongside Stephen Mahoney, former General Surgery Resident.*



## RETIRING STAFF



**Lynn Farber**  
*Nurse Practitioner*  
Pediatric Surgery

Division of Pediatric Surgery held a socially distanced celebration honoring the hard work Lynne gave to the Division of Pediatric Surgery and the Department of Surgery in the care of children. [Check out her retirement video.](#) Lynne worked as a nurse for 39 years, spending 26 years in the Department of Surgery at UNC, and 22 years in the Division of Pediatric Surgery. She is a national leader in pediatric surgical nursing, and her work in nursing education was recognized by her peers. She was the past president of American Pediatric Surgical Nursing Association, an editorial member of their associated journal, and on their executive board multiple times. She will truly be missed!



**Cynthia Newkirk**  
*Administrative Specialist*  
Burn Surgery

"Cynthia worked closely with many of the clinical professionals in the Jaycee Burn Center and supported the Division Chief. She diligently coordinated various programs such as the AMIT/Medics, Advisory Board and was a liaison for the hospital employees. We appreciate her dedication and professionalism to her work." - Orna Manison, Administrative Support Supervisor



**Carleta Long**  
*Administrative Specialist*  
Abdominal Transplant Surgery

"Carleta was an integral part of the abdominal transplant program. For a number of years we didn't have a dedicated clinical support professional for our non-transplant patients. Carleta became the de facto liaison for all of our patients and their families. She did such a good job and provided such empathy that many of the patients would ask to see her when they came to the hospital." - David Gerber, Chief of Abdominal Transplant



**Courtney Ruble**  
*Administrative Specialist*  
Surgical Oncology

When a 2-year promise becomes 31: Courtney Shaw was a new graduate of UNC Wilmington and looking for her first "real" job when she applied to the Department of Surgery. She worked here during the summers and her mother was the right hand of Chairman George F. Sheldon. Dr. Anthony Meyer, then Chief of General Surgery (now 5 divisions) wanted her to join his team as his secretary. She was honored but told him she would only be here for two years and did not want him to have to train someone again so soon. Courtney Ruble retired September 1st with 31 years of service at UNC, all in the Department of Surgery! She worked her way up and through the department as a trusted, intelligent, and dedicated employee. She served as Division Manager of Vascular Surgery and Surgical Oncology, managed staff, and fellowships - all with professionalism and grace. We as a department are better for having had Courtney as part of the Surgery family for these 31 years and wish her the best in this new chapter of her life.

I can't imagine the Division of Surgical Oncology without Courtney - I think that she starting working with us after graduating from kindergarten. She has been an invaluable resource, a constant force of stability, and she will be sorely missed."

- HJ Kim, Chief of Surgical Oncology and Endocrine Surgery

## NEW HEALTHCARE STAFF



**Ashley Stout**  
*Physicians Assistant*  
Burn Surgery ICU

Ashley received her undergraduate degree from Clemson University, a Bachelor of Sciences in 2016 before earning her Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from South University in Savannah Georgia in 2020. Most recently she came to us from Novant Health System - Northern Virginia Surgical Specialties where she did a clinical rotation with the General Surgery Services. Ashley also has clinical rotation experience in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Emergency Medicine and Pediatrics.

## PUBLICATIONS | ABDOMINAL TRANSPLANT

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## IN THE LOOP

### EDUCATION

Unfortunately, our August Faculty Retreat has been postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. We will reschedule the event in Summer 2021.

The PGY4 and PGY5 General Surgery residents had Mock Orals on March 16, 2020. Thank you to all the members of the faculty who served as examiners. The next Mock Orals will be on September 13, 2020 using a virtual platform. Faculty examiners are still needed. Those interested please RSVP to Crystal Boney.



Amy Shaheen, MD

Our educational Grand Rounds series continues. Dr. Amy Shaheen gave a wonderful Grand Rounds on June 3, 2020 ("Getting Learners Involved in Quality Improvement"). Dr. Neva Howard spoke on September 2, 2020 ("Adaptive Learning").



Neva Howard, MD

Dr. Roy Phitayakorn from Harvard will be our virtual professor for Resident as Teachers conference ("Adult Learning Theories") on 9/29/20. He will also give virtual Grand Rounds ("Emotional Intelligence and Teamwork in Surgery") on 9/30/20.



Roy Phitayakorn, MD

Our upcoming Career Corner talks are scheduled, as below.

Dr. Jonathan Oberlander - "Impact of the elections on the ACA" (9/9/20)

Dr. Melina Kibbe - "Writing a manuscript" (1/6/21)

Dr. John Ikonomidis - "Time management" (3/20/21)

Dr. Annamarie Connolly - "One-minute preceptor" (6/2/21)  
Finally, congratulations to our Academy of Educators award winners:



Application/Individualization Phase Clinical Preceptor Excellence in Teaching Award  
**Stephanie Downs-Canner, MD**



Educational Mentor/Advisor Award  
**Jason Long, MD, MPH**



Craver Professor Award  
**Luigi Pascarella, MD**

Sincerely,



**Timothy Farrell, MD**

*Vice Chair of Education*

**Muneera Kapadia, MD**

*Associate Vice Chair of Education*









# RESEARCH

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

[Carolina Data Warehouse for Health \(CDW-H\)](#) is a central data repository containing clinical, research, and administrative data sourced from the UNC Health Care System.

In response to the COVID-19 situation, they will be following the university's lead and adjusting their event scheduling as needed. They have suspended all on-site office hours until further notice. CDW staff are still available to answer research questions: just [request a consult](#) and they will be in touch. Please visit UNC-Chapel Hill's dedicated [coronavirus updates webpage](#) for Carolina's most recent announcements regarding COVID-19.

[SPIN Plus](#) is a comprehensive funding opportunities database that gives UNC researchers access to over 40,000 funding opportunities from more than 10,000 federal and non-federal sponsors. Additional information about SPIN is available here: <https://research.unc.edu/research-development/finding-funding/spin-plus-funding-database/>

## RESEARCH TRAININGS AND EVENTS

### Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) Training

REDCap is a secure web application that can be used to build and manage case report forms, surveys and other data capture mechanisms for clinical research. NC TraCS offers training classes to assist researchers in getting started with building REDCap data collection forms for their research projects. For more information about REDCap or to sign-up for future trainings, please visit the <https://tracs.unc.edu/index.php/services/biomedical-informatics/redcap>.

### Introduction to EMERSE

EMERSE (Electronic Medical Record Search Engine) allows users to search free text (unstructured) clinical notes from the electronic health record. This training will cover what EMERSE is, how it works, and how to use it appropriately. For more information about EMERSE or to sign-up for future trainings, please visit the <https://tracs.unc.edu/index.php/services/biomedical-informatics/emerse>.

## RESEARCH SUPPORT

### PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

**Grace Chen, BA**, our Research Administrator, and **Annie Skilton, MSLS, CRA**, our Research Program Coordinator, provide support for all areas of proposal development including clinical trials and will be your main contacts (see below for group assignments) for all things relating to pre-award research. They will help you with developing your budget, compiling the appropriate documentation for your proposal, routing your grant for submission and coordinating with the Office of Clinical Trials, the sponsor, and administration. Please notify Grace or Annie as early as possible, but at least 6 weeks before the due date, as external grants must be routed and submitted to the university 7 days before the due date!

Groups assigned to Grace	
Burn	Vascular
Pediatric Surgery	Plastics and Reconstructive
Gastrointestinal Surgery	Chair

Groups assigned to Annie	
Abdominal Transplant	Cardiothoracic
General and Acute Care	Surgical Oncology
Resident   Trainees	

To request grant submission assistance or clinical trial contract submission, please complete the [online service request form](#) found under *Research* on the UNC Surgery website. To request clinical trial contract submission, please complete the [online service request form](#).

### BIOSTATISTICS

The Department of Surgery is collaborating with the **North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences Institute (NC TraCS)** to provide biostatistical consultations and support to our faculty members

and residents. Biostatistics support can be requested through the [NC TraCS website](#). If you are using a database, creating a database or have questions as to whether you need a biostatistician, please continue to contact Paula Strassle and Charley Gaber through the [online service request form](#) found under *Research* on the UNC Surgery website.

### DATABASE MANAGEMENT

**Paula Strassle, PhD, MSPH**, Assistant Professor, is our Database Manager. Her team will provide assistance for data collection, database set-up, and chart reviews. They will help you organize and think about your data so that you will be able to analyze it when you are ready. Still have questions? Check out the [FAQs](#). They are in charge of the NIS, NSQIP, and SEER [databases](#) and can also point you to other databases that may be of assistance. Please contact them BEFORE you start any project involving data. To request their assistance, please complete the [online service request form](#) found under *Research* on the UNC Surgery website.

### EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

A clinical librarian and liaison from the Health Sciences Library provides support for evidence-based practice and research, including:

- Focused or comprehensive literature searching
- Critically appraising evidence
- Collaborating on systematic reviews
- Advice on presenting/publishing results
- Education on research tools and resources, including searching PubMed and other literature databases, SPIN for finding funding sources, Covidence for systematic reviews, and citation management software.

To request systematic review assistance, please complete the [online request form](#). For any other requests, contact Rebecca at [carlson@unc.edu](mailto:carlson@unc.edu).



## ABSTRACT DEADLINES

### American Surgical Association Annual Meeting (ASA) 2021

Meeting Date: April 15-17, 2021

Location: Seattle, WA

Abstract Deadline: November 16, 2020

More information [available here](#)

### 2021 Southeastern Surgical Congress (SESC)

Meeting Date: August 21-24, 2021

Location: Atlanta, GA

Abstract Deadline: Friday, February 19, 2021

More information [available here](#)

### American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2021

Meeting Date: May 20-23, 2021

Location: Phoenix, AZ

Abstract Deadline: October 13, 2020

More information [available here](#)

### American Society of Breast Surgeons 2021

Meeting Date: April 28-May 2, 2021

Location: Orlando, FL

Abstract Deadline: November 4, 2020

More information [available here](#)

### American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons 2021

Meeting Date: April 24-28, 2021

Location: Las Vegas, NV

Abstract Deadline: September 25, 2020

More information [available here](#)

### American Burn Association 2021

Meeting Date: April 6-9, 2021

Location: Chicago, IL

Abstract Deadline: October 1, 2020

More information [available here](#)

### International Society for Burn Injuries 2021

Meeting Date: June 14-17, 2021

Location: Birmingham, UK

Abstract Deadline: Open in November

More information [available here](#)

### Association for Surgical Education

Meeting Date: April 27-May 1, 2021

Location: Boston, MA

Abstract Deadline: November 6, 2020

More information [available here](#)

## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

### FACULTY

#### Americas Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association (AHPBA)

##### 2021 Research Development Grant

Application Deadline: November 2, 2020

- The purpose of this award is to provide the opportunity for Junior faculty (less than 7 years from fellowship training graduation) to perform research during the 2021-2022 academic year.
- The research can be clinical, outcomes, translational, or basic science, but must focus on the liver, pancreas, or biliary system.

For more information: <https://www.ahpba.org/awards-grants/research-grant/>

#### NC TraCS Pilot Awards for Translational Research

Application Deadline: September 22, 2020 and March 2021

the next deadlines for three NC TraCS Pilot award programs:

- [\\$5-50K Translational Research Matched Pilot Grants](#)
- [FastTraCS Funding: Special emphasis on drugs, devices and diagnostics development](#)
- [Translational Science Methods and Process Awards \(TSMFA\)](#)

For more information about these pilot grant mechanisms please contact [Paul Kerr](#) or [nctracs@unc.edu](mailto:nctracs@unc.edu).

### FACULTY & RESIDENTS

#### NC TraCS \$2K Grant Awards

Application Deadline 2020: September 15, 2020

Award Amount: \$2,000

More information available [here](#).



# GRAND ROUNDS

Wednesdays 7:15 am - 8:15 am at the 4th floor Clinic Auditorium

9/23/2020

Byah Thomason Doxey Sanford Doxey  
Visiting Professor **Jessica Kandel, MD**,  
Mary Campau Ryerson Professor of Surgery  
Surgeon-in-Chief, The University of Chicago  
Medicine Comer Children's Hospital Chief,  
Section of Pediatric Surgery

UNC School of Medicine; William B. Aycock  
Distinguished Professor of Family Medicine

10/28/2020

Chief Resident Presentations: Charles  
Schafer and Peter Marcinkowski, UNC  
General Surgery Residents

11/25/2020

NO GRAND ROUNDS  
HAPPY THANKSGIVING

12/2/2020

Faculty Meeting

9/30/2019

Visiting Professor  
**Roy Phitayakorn, MD**, Associate Professor  
of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

11/4/2020

**SHELDON RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM -**  
Organized by Staci Aubry, UNC General  
Surgery Chief Resident

12/9/2020

TBD

10/07/2020

STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

11/11/2020

George Johnson Jr. Distinguished Visiting  
Professor **Gilbert Upchurch** Chair of  
the Department of Surgery, University of  
Florida, Gainesville, Florida

12/16/2020

George F. Sheldon Distinguished Visiting  
Professor **Jayme E. Locke, MD, MPH**,  
**FACS, FAST**, Associate Professor of Surgery,  
Chief, Division of Transplantation, Mark H.  
Deierhoi, MD Endowed Professor

10/14/2020

Research - American College of Surgeons  
Presentations

11/18/2020

Interdisciplinary (Anesthesiology) M & M,  
please be aware of the time change for  
this meeting.

12/23/2020

NO GRAND ROUNDS

10/21/2020

Faculty Meeting with the Executive  
**Cristy Page, MD, MPH** Executive Dean,

12/30/2020

NO GRAND ROUNDS

## GENERAL SURGERY RESIDENCY PROGRAM



UNC

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Surgery

## VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Join us to learn more about our program from the  
Program Directors, faculty, and residents.



Michael O. Meyers, MD  
Residency Program Director

SEPTEMBER 16 5:30PM (EST)

Register at <https://bit.ly/2F4AhVb>

OCTOBER 5 7PM (EST)

Register at <https://bit.ly/2QR6imu>



Trista Reid, MD  
Associate Program Director

Questions? Email [kathie\\_patterson@med.unc.edu](mailto:kathie_patterson@med.unc.edu)





# COMMUNICATIONS

## TOP 6 FACULTY PROFILE VIDEOS (May - July 2020)



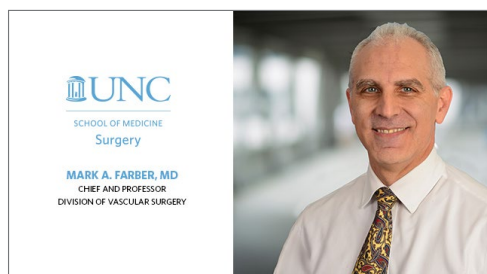
Adeyemi Ogunleye, MD (No Higher Calling Than Treating Sick Patients)  
Views: 128 Avg view duration: 2:03



Melina Kibbe, MD (Committed to Patient Centered Care)  
Views: 103 Avg view duration: 1:55



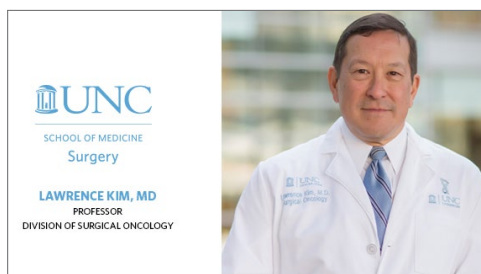
Benjamin Haithcock, MD, (Serving the Great Folks of North Carolina)  
Views: 98 Avg view duration: 2:41



Mark A. Farber, MD (On the Forefront of Advancing Medicine)  
Views: 98 Avg view duration: 2:30



Andrea Hayes-Jordan, MD (Saving Generations of Children)  
Views: 98 Avg view duration: 1:50



Lawrence Kim, MD (Altering the Course of a Disease)  
Views: 92 Avg view duration: 2:29

## PATIENT STORY

### "Something Truly Special": The Roney Family Story



## SOCIAL



George Floyd  
moment of silence

13.5k  
Impressions  
3k  
Engagements

FACEBOOK  
f



Xavier Baldwin, MD  
Fellowship Winner

5.6k  
Impressions  
495  
Engagements

TWITTER  
t



Day of Surgery  
Pediatric Video

527  
Watch Time  
(hours)  
14.5k  
Views

YOUTUBE  
v



@UNCSurgery doctors, nurses, residents, fellows, and staff knelt in silence yesterday for 9 min, taking a moment from the chaos around them to join together. The silence spoke, we hear you, we kneel beside one another in this fight against racism. @UNC\_Health\_Care | @kibbemr



9:33 AM · Jun 10, 2020 · Twitter Web App

|| View Tweet activity

7 Retweets 21 Likes





SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Surgery

Department of Surgery  
Burnett-Womack Bldg CB7050  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

## MAKE A GIFT

Philanthropy inspires innovation and paves the way for healthier futures for our patients. Gifts to the Department of Surgery advance surgical care in the operating room and the clinic, enable us to pursue bold ideas in the research arena, and provide a rigorous training experience for tomorrow's surgical leaders.

For information about ways to support the UNC Department of Surgery or to make a gift, please contact Mary Margaret Carroll, Senior Executive Director of Development at the Medical Foundation of NC, at [mary\\_carroll@med.unc.edu](mailto:mary_carroll@med.unc.edu), (919) 843-8443 or visit [go.unc.edu/uncsurgery](http://go.unc.edu/uncsurgery).

## MISSION

The Department of Surgery's mission is to provide the highest quality patient care to all people through innovation, world-class research, and training the next generation of surgical health care professionals and scientists.

## VISION

To be the nation's leading public academic Department of Surgery.



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