IN the SPOTLIGHT

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www.mcg.edu/som/anes
This year’s American Society of Anesthesiologists meeting is a bit more exciting for us than usual. For one, we are presenting more posters than we have in probably the past 15 or 20 years, and eight of our residents are named as either a first author or a co-author. I am proud of how involved our faculty and residents have become in national presentations. For another, we’re hosting a reception this year, and invite all of you to join us. We are the oldest anesthesiology residency program in the South and will be celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2012. We want you to be a part of the excitement.

I invite you to stop by our 75th Anniversary Kickoff on Oct. 18, 6-8 p.m., during the ASA national meeting. You’ll find us in the Aqua Room of the Hilton San Diego Bayfront. Please join us for conversation, hors d’oeuvres and drinks. We’d like to take photos of you at this kickoff so we can include as many of our alumni, faculty and friends as possible in our slide presentation at our upcoming 75th anniversary gala during MCG Homecoming in April 2012.

MCG’s anesthesiology department has a long history of education and clinical accomplishments, and more faculty than ever are now interested in research. Drs. Steffen Meiler and Tohru Ikuta are studying potential new treatments for sickle cell disease. Drs. Manuel Castresana, Eugene Betts and I were each involved in multicenter clinical trials that have published result papers. On the horizon are clinical and educational studies by Drs. Sanjeev Kapuria and Jim Mayfield.

On the clinical front, we are sponsoring the Fundamental Critical Care Support workshop in January 2011. During this two-day workshop, we will showcase our new high-tech training mannequin.

All in all, quite a bit of good work coming from the South’s oldest academic department of anesthesiology.

C. Alvin Head, M.D.
Professor and Chairman
MCG to Host SUDAC Meeting

MCG will host the 2011 Southern Universities Department of Anesthesiology Chairs meeting. SUDAC consists of 39 anesthesiology departments. Recent meetings have been hosted by Emory University, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Miami and the University of Virginia.

Dr. C. Alvin Head and Financial Director Ray Brees plan to discuss academic anesthesiology practice issues – for example, managing reduced residency work hours while maintaining competency training, staff compensation, patient care reimbursement, and supporting research in difficult financial times – with fellow chairmen and administrators. Patient safety and quality methodologies will be an important topic, as Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements depend not only on performance, but also on appropriate documentation.

“A strong administration is now considered the fourth leg of the academic stool (the other three being clinical, research, and education) needed to survive and navigate through these difficult times in an academic practice. The SUDAC meeting addresses these issues and we share our knowledge freely so that all can learn from each other,” said Dr. Head.

ASA Meeting

We are well-represented at the American Society of Anesthesiologists meeting in San Diego this October. In addition to 11 poster presentations:

- Dr. William Hammonds will chair the Museum Committee for the Wood Library-Museum Foundation.
- Dr. C. Alvin Head is on the Anesthesiology Practice Management expert panel.
- Dr. Mary Arthur is an alternate delegate.
- Dr. Manuel Castresana reviewed critical care abstracts and is a meeting moderator for the second year in a row.

BLS Training

Anesthesiology instructor Pam Rosema has trained more than 7,000 people in basic life support, advanced cardiac life support and Fundamental Critical Care Support Courses since 1992. She recently gave a refresher course to anesthesiology faculty, staff and residents.

Congratulations...

(The following awards were presented during the Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine annual awards banquet in June at The Richmond on the Green)

...Dr. Mary Arthur, Associate Professor, Margaret B. DeVore Residents’ Choice Award.

...Dr. Robert O’Bannon, Assistant Professor, Jack B. Williams Award of Excellence in Anesthesia Education.

...Dr. Anuj Aryal, Robert D. Dripps Memorial Award honoring a senior resident’s educational achievements. Dr. Aryal was also recognized for “best presentation” at a journal club meeting.

...Dr. Nicholas Coates, Resident Educator Award for mentoring medical students involved in the anesthesia clerkship.

...Dr. Stephen Wells, Robert S. Crumrine Award for exemplifying the characteristics of an anesthesiologist as a first-year resident.

...Third-year resident Vikas Kumar was elected vice president of the Residents Component of the Georgia Society of Anesthesiologists during the society’s summer meeting. He will serve as president next year.

...Dr. Stevin Dubin, Associate Professor, was named Consultant of the Year by the Department of Otolaryngology. Dr. Dubin, who was chosen unanimously, was the first anesthesiologist to receive the honor.

...Rex Davis, son of administrative assistant Katie Davis, is one of Georgia’s top-100 high school baseball players. The Greenbrier High School senior will pitch for Savannah State University, an NCAA Division I school, on a full scholarship next year. Through a special program, Rex will play at Savannah State and graduate with a computer engineering degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology.
The Aqualumni are descendents of Dr. Ralph Waters, the father of academic anesthesiology. Early in the 20th century, anesthesiology in the United States was considered somewhat menial, unworthy of the training and expertise of a physician. This attitude began to change after Dr. Waters joined the University of Wisconsin faculty in 1927 to teach anesthesia to medical students and develop a postgraduate anesthesia program.

According to Dr. Lucien Morris in an American Society of Anesthesiologists newsletter, “hundreds of academicians throughout the world and more than 120 departmental chairs in 80 medical schools of the United States alone have been of the Waters’ lineage. Few of the ‘Aqualumni’ (Waters’ own resident trainees) had the personal dynamics or the persuasive charm equal to that of their mentor, but all who had been in the Wisconsin program left with a sense of purpose and determination to share with others their knowledge and professional approach to anesthesiology.”

Most of the Aqualumni joined university centers, including Drs. Virginia Apgar, Columbia University; Robert D. Dripps, University of Pennsylvania; Emery A. Rovenstine, New York University; and Perry Volpitto, MCG. Of the 60 who trained under Dr. Waters at the University of Wisconsin, 40 taught in academic centers, and half of these became chairmen or directors of academic programs in medical schools.

Dr. Morris and his wife, Jean, drew an Aqualumni Tree to illustrate Dr. Waters’ influence on teaching anesthesia to physicians. The main branches represent the original trainees. Dr. William Hammonds, anesthesiology professor and trustee of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, notes that he and Department Chairman C. Alvin Head are descendants of Dr. John Steinhaus, who trained in the Waters’ tradition.

Visit www.mcg.edu/som/anes and click on “About Us,” then “History,” to see a 1937 photo of the Aqualumni.

Rawlings believes in caring for people

Chief Resident Lee Rawlings sees a big difference between treating patients and truly caring for people. This concept has become quite clear to him over the past few years since he started volunteering on two-week medical missions in underserved parts of the world. So far he has volunteered in Peru, Kenya, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Bulgaria and Mexico through the Summer Medical Institute sponsored by First Presbyterian Church of Augusta.

“What impresses me most is what the need truly is,” he says. “We need to care for people, not necessarily treat patients.” He keenly remembers a woman he met in Nairobi, Kenya, in one of the biggest slums in the world. She had contracted AIDS from her husband, and was unable to pay for antiretroviral therapy. Rawlings was struck by her spirit despite her dire situation: “She was still hopeful, thankful for the life she’d been given, thankful for the care we provided even if we couldn’t cure her or even keep her alive for more than a year. She found peace through the message we were sharing with her.”

Rawlings, whose physician father influenced his career choice, volunteered at hospitals as an undergrad at the University of Florida, where he joined the Golden Key International Honour Society and Alpha Epsilon Delta Honor Society. He started attending First Presbyterian as a second-year medical student, also teaching Sunday school and leading medical class Bible studies.

“Medicine is the most direct way to make another person feel better,” says Rawlings, whose anesthesiology honors include the 2007 Z.W. Gramling Memorial Scholarship Award, the 2008 Resident Educator Award and the 2008 Robert S. Crumrine Award.

Dr. Lee Rawlings (left) poses with a patient and fellow volunteer in a mobile clinic in Manila, Philippines, in 2005.
A recent multicenter study found a biodegradable sponge ineffective in preventing sternal wound infections in high-risk patients after cardiac surgery.

Sternal wound infections after cardiac surgeries, particularly in patients with diabetes or obesity, can lengthen hospital stays and increase mortality rates. The gentamicin-collagen sponge was developed to prevent and treat wound infections by concentrating the antibiotic on the wound and avoiding potential kidney damage if administered by other means.

In the study, 1,502 cardiac surgery patients with diabetes and/or obesity were randomly assigned to receive either standard care (prophylactic antibiotics and rigid sternal fixation) or standard care plus two sponges inserted between the sternal halves. MCG was among the 48 U.S. sites.

The sponge was found ineffective in preventing infection, contradicting an earlier Swedish study. The authors note that the latter study included more quality-control measures and a greater number of hospitals (48 vs. two).

“Although it is disappointing that the sponge failed to prevent infections in these at-risk patients, this study highlights the importance of publishing negative results, so that our peers are alerted to ineffective as well as effective therapies. This trial also points to the value of large validation studies in ensuring that we are treating our patients to the best of our ability,” said study investigator Dr. Manuel Castresana.

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Medical students scope out anesthesiology

Nearly every month from August through May, five or six medical students rotate through our department as part of the anesthesiology core clerkship. The students learn the basics of anesthetic management and assist in the preoperative clinic, main adult operating room, cardiac anesthesia room, obstetrical anesthesia suites, pain clinic and Children’s Medical Center.

Says fourth-year medical student Ashley LeFevre, “I like the hands-on aspect of the clerkship. They let us be a part of the team, and the residents have all been very patient with us.”

Dr. Ranita Donald, the clerkship director since 2000, will present an educational exhibit about developing a successful clerkship at the American Society of Anesthesiologists meeting in San Diego in October.

Antibiotic sponge ineffective on sternal wound infections

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Study notes risks of desflurane during pediatric surgery

A recent study determined that the anesthetic, desflurane, poses greater airway risks than isoflurane in children during surgery.

Children undergoing elective surgery at 10 centers, including MCG Medical Center, were randomly selected to receive one of the two anesthetics. Anesthesiologists used the airway support of their choice, with most using a laryngeal mask airway; the others used facemasks.

The researchers found that desflurane posed greater airway risks than isoflurane during removal of the laryngeal mask, particularly in children who were not awake during surgery. No significant differences in airway problems were noted at other points during surgery. No recovery delays or overnight admissions were reported.

Dr. Eugene Betts oversaw the MCG study.
Peer-Reviewed Publications


Bennett-Guerrero E, Ferguson TB, Lin M, et al., for the SWIPE-1 Trial Group. Effect of an implantable gentamicin-collagen sponge on sternal wound infections following cardiac surgery: a randomized trial. Journal of the American Medical Association 2010;304(7):755-762. [Dr. Manuel Castresana is a SWIPE-1 investigator]


Presentations and Abstracts

Gallen T, Arthur ME, Castresana MR. Anesthesia for hybrid convergent ablation procedures: what have we learned? American Society of Anesthesiologists, 2010

O’Bannon RT, Dubin S. Prevention of progressive deterioration of motor evoked potentials during general anesthesia. Society for Neuroscience in Anesthesiology and Critical Care, San Diego, CA, 2010

Rawlings J, Spivey J, Castresana M. Combined propofol and ketamine for the anesthetic management of direct current cardioversions. American Society of Anesthesiologists, 2010


Setty H, Gallo T, Rothfield K. Use of the video rigid flexible laryngoscope in awake intubations. American Society of Anesthesiologists, 2010


Scientific and Educational Exhibits

Donald RR, Odo N, Dawkins S, Mason N. Strategies for a successful anesthesiology clerkship and rewarding medical student experience. American Society of Anesthesiologists, 2010

Medically Challenging Cases


Crews LK, Mattingly D, Florentino-Pineda I. The use of dexmedetomidine during nasotracheal intubation in a patient with Charge Syndrome. Society for Pediatric Anesthesiology, 2010, San Antonio, TX


Mason N, Donald RR, Reynolds D. Anesthesia for cesarean section in a patient with severe pulmonary valve stenosis, pulmonary hypertension and TEF repair. American Society of Anesthesiologists, 2010

Mattingly D, Crews LK, Florentino-Pineda I. Intranasal septal perforation in a 4-year-old by an impacted button battery: a case report and report of the literature. Society for Pediatric Anesthesiology, 2010

Rawlings J, Spivey J, Castresana M. Unanticipated acute adrenal insufficiency during emergency thoracotomy re-exploration. American Society of Anesthesiologists, 2010


Letters to the Editor

Adamkiewicz TV, Abboud MR, Alvarez OA, Odo N. Serum ferritin does not correlate with transfusion rate. Blood 2010;115(14);2981-2982

Currently Funded Research


Dr. Castresana, Principal Investigator. Prospective observational trial to investigate the clinical utility of the integrated pulmonary index (IPI) to predict ability to wean from mechanical ventilation. Innocoll Inc.

Dr. Tohru Ikuta, Principal Investigator. New hydroxyurea-based combination therapy for sickle cell disease. NCMHD Southeastern Exploratory Sickle Cell Center of Excellence.

Dr. Steffen Meiler, Co-Investigator. Nanomedicine Center for Nucleoprotein Machines. NIH/Nanomedicine Roadmap.

Dr. Meiler, Co-Investigator. Exploratory Center for Excellence for Minority Health and Health Disparities. NIH/NCMD.
As we approach our 75th year of training future physicians and providing patient care, we ask for your support in funding the first endowed chair and the first endowed professorship for the Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine.

Dr. Zachariah W. Gramling, department chairman from 1974-83, oversaw progress including growth of the housestaff, enhancement of an anesthesiology elective for medical students to meet the needs of future physicians, and the founding of MCG’s Department of Respiratory Therapy in the School of Allied Health Sciences. Dr. Gramling received the Crawford W. Long Award from the Georgia Society of Anesthesiologists for his significant contributions to anesthesiology. It is certainly fitting that we acknowledge Dr. Gramling’s accomplishments in perpetuity by naming our first endowed chair fund in his honor.

Dr. Margaret B. DeVore received the MCG School of Medicine’s 1978 Distinguished Faculty Award and the 1989 Residents’ Choice Award, which is named in her honor. Dr. DeVore is a well-respected and revered teacher, Professor Emerita, and Associate Dean of Students Emerita. The first endowed professorship in anesthesiology will be named in her honor for her tremendous contributions to the department, dedication to educational excellence and wonderful rapport with our house staff.

Our 75th anniversary is a time to celebrate how far we’ve come as a department. Both Drs. Gramling and DeVore have been significant partners in our success. Your gift to support one of these funds today will help reinforce the strong foundation we have built to date.

Our goal is to have these two endowments funded by our 75th anniversary celebration in 2012. Let’s make it happen together.

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[ ] Margaret B. DeVore Professorship in Anesthesiology

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In this issue, we express our gratitude for a gift in honor of Dr. Robert Matthew (Medicine, ’49, Anesthesiology ’52), who passed away Oct. 12, 2009. After serving in the Army and graduating from Vanderbilt University, Dr. Matthew completed medical school and an anesthesiology residency at MCG. He served on our faculty for two years before serving as an anesthesiologist in the Korean War, where he received the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service. Dr. Matthew became the first board-certified anesthesiologist at Phoebe Putney Hospital in Albany, Ga., and was a founding partner of Albany Anesthesia Associates. He served on the MCG Foundation Board of Directors, was president of the MCG Alumni Association and received the 2002 Distinguished Alumnus Award. Survivors include wife Marie, a son, a daughter, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Please mail to:

Tony Duva
Associate Vice President for Gift Planning and Senior Director of Development,
School of Medicine
Medical College of Georgia Alumni Center
919 15th Street, FI-1000
Augusta, GA 30912

Gifts to the Georgia Health Sciences Foundation are deductible to the extent provided by law. The MCG fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30. For more information about giving, please call 706-721-1939. To make a donation online, visit www.gahsf.org.

75 years
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
October 16–20  San Diego, Ca.

We hope you’ve made reservations for the ASA meeting because you’re invited to our reception. Stop by the Aqua Room of the Hilton San Diego Bayfront on Monday, Oct. 18, 6–8 p.m. for drinks, hors d’oeuvres and lively conversation.

A photographer will take pictures so we can include as many alumni, faculty and friends as possible in our photo montage for our 75th anniversary celebration in 2012. Susan Dawkins, our residency program coordinator and probably the most recognizable face in our department, can’t wait to catch up on what you’ve been doing in your career. If you’ve done some great things with your life — and haven’t we all? — please let her know about it. We’d like to let everyone else know how well you’re doing in your career, and maybe mention it in an upcoming newsletter.

While you’re here, we’ll share more plans for our 75th anniversary celebration. We want to see as many of our faculty, residents and alumni as possible. Come join the fun!

American Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists  
October 15  San Diego, Ca.

Fundamental Critical Care Support  
January 29-30