

# SurgeryNews

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## Chairman Message



During the past three months, New York City has been at the epicenter of the Coronavirus Pandemic. New York Presbyterian reached a peak on April 12<sup>th</sup> with more than 2,500 COVID in-patients; at NewYork-Presbyterian - Weill Cornell Medicine we had 470 COVID+ in-patients, half of them in ICUs. The Department came together in fighting this pandemic and contributed to the herculean efforts to care for and save lives of innumerable patients. The first few articles in this E-Newsletter are dedicated to different reflections on the Pandemic.

The COVID pandemic levied a disproportionate toll in the African-American population. In this context, we were all even more horrified, distressed and grief-stricken by the killings of George Floyd and several other African Americans. The faculty, staff and residents of the Department of Surgery were profoundly touched by these events, a reminder that inequality, injustice and racism remain in our society. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, many residents marched in the "White Coats for Black Lives" in New York and on June 8<sup>th</sup> the Department organized a session against racism: both events are summarized in the following pages.

At the time of this writing, New York has turned the corner on the coronavirus pandemic, as positive trends in public health data continue. With new cases from COVID-19 down significantly, and exactly 100 days since New York City's first confirmed case of COVID-19, the five boroughs entered the first of a four part reopening on June 8<sup>th</sup>. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, we graduated this year chief residents and we welcomed the new class of surgical interns. A traditional, annual rite of congratulatory acknowledgement for the graduating chiefs and welcoming renewal for the incoming residents, this year these two events acquired a new special meaning.

In the midst of the pandemic, we were able to maintain our educational programs by hosting the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Preston A. Wade M.D. Visiting Professor Lectureship with nationally renowned guest lecturer, **Todd E. Rasmussen, MD, FACS, Colonel USAF MC** on a Zoom platform. We also recognized the first class of Faculty and Residents Teaching All Stars. Over the past four years, we have been pleased by a steep rise in the overall quality rating of the surgical clerkship by the medical students in the surgery clerkship, a success largely due to the excellent teaching of faculty and residents.

I hope you find this issue of interest and welcome your feedback about our E-Newsletter. Please be sure to follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) for the latest updates and information in the Department of Surgery.

Sincerely yours,

**Fabrizio Michelassi, MD, FACS**

Lewis Atterbury Stimson Professor of Surgery

Chairman, Department of Surgery

Surgeon-in-Chief

NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center



**Weill Cornell Medicine**



**NewYork-Presbyterian**

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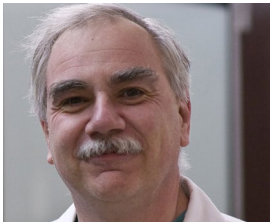
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## COVID: Surgery in the News

### Descent Into Hell

(as seen on sisna.org)

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod PPE and thy staff pizza deliveries, they comfort me.-Psalm 23 (with apologies to



King James)", proclaimed **Philip S. Barie, MD, MBA, MASTER CCM, FIDSA, FACS**, Professor of Surgery and Professor of Public Health in Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine and Attending Surgeon at NewYork-Presbyterian.

The statistics defy credulity and imagination. 106,000 afflicted in New York City, and more than 202,000 (10,800+ deaths) across New York State. About 10% have required hospitalization, and about 25% of those, the ICU (and a ventilator). Casualties (the word was chosen carefully) of this magnitude have not been seen ever before in peacetime. We've been stretched to our limits medically, and in some locales, beyond.

The politicos and the epidemiologists say the curve is "flattening" in New York State. I hope so, for all our sakes. From my perspective, its harder to tell; the Department of Surgery still has three intensive care units (one that is makeshift [transformed from an ambulatory surgery recovery area]), full of 52 critically ill patients with COVID-19, collectively among the sickest patients I have ever cared for. As the number of new cases presenting directly to us decreases, we are taking patients in transfer from beleaguered smaller hospitals in our network, so we are always full with COVID-19, and will be for some time. There is no end in sight, no return to normalcy (in whatever form that may assume).

I've been in the ICU for most of the last two weeks, so I am coming to understand this disease. Even as we were learning about COVID-19 and managing individual patients, the similarities among patients were striking and it became challenging to keep track. Imagine making rounds on 20 critically ill patients every day, and at every bedside the situation is nearly identical. Upwards of 100 daily arterial blood gas determinations to account for, and that just one of many, many "moving parts" day-in and day-out. Renal function and hyper-coagulability require equal attentiveness. Thus, we had to change fundamentally

what and how we communicate. We also had two other tasks to manage simultaneously. Knowing that we would be tasked to manage multiple units, perhaps in disparate locations and certainly with the assistance of practitioners reassigned from other clinical duties and unfamiliar with critical care, we had to adjust existing protocols and create new ones to support these unique, unstable patients. Of equal importance was supporting our teams, maintaining high reliability and morale lest we be faced with the certitude of failure.

In a way it has been exhilarating, having skills and experience to respond effectively to a crisis of such magnitude. It has been refreshing to think deeply again about respiration physiology, on which I "cut my teeth," and multiple organ dysfunction syndrome, to which I devoted my voyage of discovery. I thank my mentors every day. At my core I am a university professor as well as a surgeon, a clinician-scientist and a teacher. In the midst of this horror, we are providing skilled and compassionate care, teaching, learning, and answering questions. Importantly, keeping our teams cohesive and high functioning. The "rules" being somewhat relaxed and the "authorities" being somewhat distracted, it has been conducive to innovation and bold steps when necessary for the benefit of the patients.

Finally, let me extend a few heartfelt words of thanks. To our faculty colleagues, who have pitched in immeasurably with crucial tasks such as maintaining close contact with families now that visitation is suspended. To colleagues and erstwhile residents, who have volunteered to help us provide patient care, contacted us to impart how the training they received as residents has helped them function now as impromptu intensivists, or just to provide expressions of encouragement. To our donors, whether providing ventilators, PPE, or the enormous quantity of takeout food that sustains us. And to the readers, for considering these words. Thank you all.

[Read full article here.](#)

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## COVID: Surgery in the News

### Watch Doctors Explain Why COVID-19 May Be More Dangerous for African Americans

(as seen on time.com)

"It was certainly predictable that we would see that the frequency of COVID-19 is disproportionately higher in African Americans, and death rates from COVID-19 are disproportionately higher in African Americans," said **Dr. Lisa Newman**, Chief of the Section of Breast Surgery at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine. In addition, at the NewYork-Presbyterian David H. Koch Center, Dr. Newman leads the multidisciplinary breast oncology programs which provides the finest, most compassionate care to women and men affected by breast cancer.

The African American community is facing systemic forces that make them particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 outbreak, two doctors said in a video series TIME is producing with Katie Couric.

Black Americans appear to be disproportionately more likely to become severely ill or die from COVID-19 than other racial groups. Dr. Newman explained to Couric that African Americans face worse death rates for other diseases, including diabetes, hypertension and cancer as a result from higher poverty rates, coupled with access to health care. Therefore, it was no surprise that they are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. African Americans may also be more likely to hold essential jobs where they may come into contact with the disease, like in health care or transportation.

[Full article here.](#) Watch Doctors Explain Why COVID-19 May Be More Dangerous for African Americans Doctors explained the biological and social challenges in a video series TIME is producing with Katie Couric [time.com](#)





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## COVID: Surgery in the News

### ACS COVID-19 UPDATE

(as seen on [facs.org](https://www.facs.org))

To help surgeons and hospitals through the different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American College of Surgeons started issuing a COVID-19 Newsletter twice a week. As part of the Newsletter, Regents were asked to post messages to Fellows addressing various aspects of the pandemic.

As one of several messages, **Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi**, delivered a [video message](#) of hope and resiliency to the surgical community. Dr. Michelassi is a Regent of the American College of Surgeons; the Lewis Atterbury Stimson Professor and Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College; and Surgeon-in-Chief at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center.





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## COVID: Thank You To Our Healthcare Heroes



## pan.dem.ic

*noun*

**an outbreak of a pandemic disease**

During the months of March - May, New York City was at the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic. NewYork-Presbyterian reached a peak on April 12<sup>th</sup> with more than 2,500 COVID patients, one third of whom in the ICU; at NYP-WCM we had 470 COVID+ patients, half of them in ICUs. In order to accommodate the surge, we dramatically expanded our ICU footprint; we limited surgeries to only emergent and urgent; we closed many outpatient venues in favor of TeleMedicine encounters and we redeployed hundreds of physicians to different tasks and locations.

The Department came together in fighting this pandemic. We have been touched by the spirit of selfless altruism that

has permeated the response of our faculty, residents and staff, and by former residents who have come back to help us. With new cases from COVID-19 down significantly, and exactly 100 days since New York City's first confirmed case of COVID-19, the five boroughs entered the first of a four part reopening on June 8<sup>th</sup>. At the time of this writing we are expecting to move to phase two by June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**[Please join us in thanking our Healthcare Heroes.](#)**

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## Session Against Racism

## Session Against Racism

After days of social unrest across the United States following the violence against George Floyd and others, the Department of Surgery held a session against racism on Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>. The session was attended by faculty and residents.

Several members of the Department of Surgery delivered remarks that sent a powerful message to all in attendance. They included:

**Drs. Rache Simmons**, Professor of Surgery and Associate Dean for Diversity, **Lisa Newman**, Professor of Surgery, Chief of Breast Surgical Oncology and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President elect of the American

College of Surgeon, **Thomas J. Fahey, III**, Professor of Surgery, Chief of Endocrine Surgery, Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery and Program Director of the General Surgery Residency, and **Dr. Solange Bayard**, PGY III resident.

**Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi**, Lewis Atterbury Stimson Professor of Surgery and Chairman of Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine and Surgeon-in-Chief at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, opened and closed the session with remarks. All remarks are transcribed here, starting with Dr. Michelassi's introduction.



“Good morning. As we slowly emerge from the incredible stress of dealing with the COVID pandemic, we have been called to face yet another pandemic, the pandemic of racial inequality, which has deepened a chronic wound and has generated anguish and pain, fear and anger. The COVID pandemic and the events of the last 12 days unfortunately serve as a reminder that inequality, injustice and racism remain in our society. It is discouraging that almost 250 years from the founding of this democracy we find ourselves to have to reaffirm our commitment to equality and justice, but it is necessary.”



### Rache Simmons, MD

Anne K. and Edwin C. Weiskopf Professor of Surgical Oncology  
Attending Surgeon, NYP/WCMC  
Assistant Dean for Faculty Diversity, WCMC

/// Good morning and thank you Dr. Michelassi for the invitation to speak this morning.

There have been numerous statements over the past week from, AAMC, Cornell University President Pollack, Dean Choi, Dr. Steve Corwin, the American College of Surgeons, and our own department condemning all discrimination and racism and particularly any form of physical violence against another person.

This issue weighs heavily on the minds of many of us. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion hosted a Diversity Town Hall meeting last Thursday to allow our WCM community to discuss their concerns and thoughts. The zoom call closed out after we reached 1000 participants. In this town hall, Dean Choi expressed his strong feelings condemning all forms of discrimination and violence and

others were allowed to speak and to listen. There were many emotional comments – some angry, some confused and some frightened for themselves and others.

For us as surgeons, it is critically important that our patients trust us and know that the Department of Surgery and the entire medical community at WCM/NYP has always and will continue to provide clinical excellence and also compassionate care to our patients equally regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, creed, nationality, politics, or sexual orientation.

We also want to respect and honor the diversity of our faculty, students, staff and colleagues. The Department of Surgery stands strong in its support of all members of our community. This message could not be more clear from our chairman, Dr. Michelassi.

Today at 2 p.m. NYP leadership is asking everyone across the NewYork-Presbyterian community to join together in observing 9 minutes of silence as a powerful symbol of unity and shared support for our colleagues, family, friends, neighbors, and patients who have experienced racism.

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## Session Against Racism

I would like to close with a quote from Dr. Steve Corwin, our CEO of NewYork-Presbyterian, in a statement he made last week. Dr. Corwin said “the change we want to see in the world must begin with each of us and must begin now for the good of our nation, for the good of New York and for the good of each other.” Thank you again for the opportunity to speak this morning.



### Lisa Newman, MD

Chief, Breast Surgical Service  
Chief, Interdisciplinary Breast Program  
Weill Cornell Medicine/NewYork-Presbyterian

//// Thank you Dr. Michelassi, for providing this forum.

The recent murders of George Floyd and several others are of course blatant examples of racism that persists in America. I was as horrified as everyone else by videotapes of the callousness with which the lives of these young African Americans were taken, and these images make it easy to understand the message Black Lives Matter.

As an African American surgeon that is also a Mom, the movement is also very personal for me- as a parent you expect to worry constantly about nearly everything related to your kids, and you want them protected from harm always, but you shouldn't have to worry about them being victims at the hands of the police, the very individuals charged with sharing your responsibility to protect them.

Now I certainly do not believe that George Floyd's murderers represent the majority of the police force, but they shouldn't represent any of them, and YES, all lives matter, but the overtly-racist nature of this murder and others occurring very recently have sparked an understanding of the Black Lives Matter movement for many individuals, regardless of their race/ethnicity.

The protests that have been ignited across the United States and now around the world in support of the movement are addressing more than the recent murders. These protests are addressing the racism that is so ingrained in the fabric of our society that poverty rates are more than twofold higher among

African Americans compared to White Americans; racism that is so rooted in our health care system that COVID-19 mortality was twice as high in African Americans compared to White Americans, and racism that is so fixed in our educational and professional opportunities pipeline that even though blacks account for nearly 15% of the American population we account for only 5% of the physician workforce, and fewer than 2% of the professor academic rank.

But through the thundering voice of this Movement we are hearing the refusal of Americans to continue being complacent in accepting the status quo of systemic racism. We are witnessing eyes opening up to the fact that we are shortchanging our country by not taking full advantage of the talent and brilliance that exists throughout all subsets of our robustly diverse population.

And there is something that each of us can do, some way that each of us can contribute to dismantling systemic racism. Some of these actions are at the individual level by confronting implicit biases and changing behaviors. Other actions are at the organizational and professional level, and as physicians we have an imperative to figure out how to achieve health equity for our patient population.

During recent meetings of the American College of Surgeons leadership, the momentum and passion to implement real change has been palpable. There is recognition that the senior leadership must leverage the power and influence of the College to make change in ways that it has never done so before. While the senior leadership can organize this momentum (and we are fortunate in having our Chairman Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi at the forefront of this effort), the College relies upon the energy, the creativity and the talents of its membership and especially the younger generation of surgeons to ensure that these efforts are enacted and that the results are durable.

Thank you for your time and attention; I am proud to be an African American, proud to be a surgeon, proud to support the Black Lives Matter movement, and proud to be here today urging you to remember to vote on November 3!!!



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## Session Against Racism



### Thomas J. Fahey, III, MD

Johnson and Johnson Distinguished Professor of Surgery  
Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery  
Chief, Endocrine and Minimally Invasive Surgery  
Director, Endocrine Oncology Program  
NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine

//// Thank you Dr. Michelassi. I would like to start by saying that the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery are shocking and abhorrent. However, I fully recognize that I cannot

possibly feel the pain that members of the Black community are feeling over these truly senseless tragedies. However, as physicians and surgeons we are trained to and expected to be able to empathize with people who are suffering in ways that we have not personally experienced. And so I feel deeply wounded and troubled by the fact that we are here again. So how do we respond?

One way to respond is by reaffirming our commitment to racial equality and fair and equitable treatment for all. Here at the hospital this can be done by reminding ourselves every day that everyone here should be treated with respect – starting with our patients and including our fellow physicians, nurses, techs and other staff.

Our department has had a long history of practicing equality and it is no accident that some of the most prominent Black surgeons in this country started their careers as residents here – Henri Ford, Robert Merritt, Tracy Ann Moo to name a few. We fully plan to continue this tradition and mindset.

Finally, I would like to say that these have been especially troubling times – for everyone – but definitely more so for our residents, especially our residents of color, who have placed themselves at the front of the line of fire during the COVID crisis over the past several months. This one-two punch that we have absorbed can be challenging to deal with for anyone, but certainly for you – the residents. So please – if you are struggling with how to deal with these crises, please let me know – or your chief resident or someone – so that we can help you to get proper help. I hope that you will.



### Solange Bayard, MD

Third Year Resident  
General Surgery, NYP/WCMC

//// I am so proud of the response from NYP and our own surgery department, speaking out against racial discrimination and vowing to make a difference in our communities. I have seen this response not only in official

statements but in real time action—there was a huge turnout amongst the residents for the “white coats for black lives” demonstration, active recruitment of more diverse grand rounds speakers from rising chiefs, and many ongoing conversations about how we can best focus our energy during this time.

Amidst the COVID pandemic and now this racial crisis, we all are in a unique position to have a direct impact on the disparities we are all seeing. From the disparities we all witnessed with COVID outcomes in minority communities, to inequities in access to between Cornell and Jamiaca, to now seeing all this racial profiling, discrimination, and recent murders that truly speak to the current state of racism in this country today—I know we all are hearing this as a call to action.

The hospital is already doing a lot to organize. There is a bicus campus committee that will be formed for interested residents through the GME to further discuss race and engage with our local communities. But I also think there is a lot we can accomplish as a surgery department. Whether it is resident QI projects that focus on assessing the experience for patients of color when they are at Cornell, or dedicated research to racial disparities within all our fields of interest, or simply taking the extra second to consider if bias is effecting our decision making with out patients—I think this is a tremendous opportunity for the residents to pick one or two initiatives we want to address over the next couple of years. I am very hopeful out of all this suffering we can create something positive.

Dr. Michelassi then concluded the session by summarizing excerpts from the recent statement by the American College of Surgeons Board of Regents and American College of Surgeons Committee on Ethics entitled “Call to Action on Racism as a Public Health Crisis: An Ethical Imperative”, which is transcribed here:

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## Session Against Racism

/// As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic upends our world and continues to take its extraordinary toll on human life, our nation experiences the horror of yet another senseless killing of a Black person by the police. At the same time as we are witnessing the disproportionate ravages caused by COVID-19, especially in African-American and other disenfranchised communities, we continue to experience the compounding effects of systemic racism that prompted the recent killing of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and now George Floyd.

At a time when people are desperately seeking a vaccine to allow them to shed their “protective face masks” and return to a semblance of normalcy, unfortunately, African Americans continue to confront, all too frequently, mistreatment or brutality by some law enforcement officers, which has given rise to more than an aspirational slogan, but rather an urgent cry: “Black Lives Matter.” Mr. Floyd’s death in Minneapolis, MN, has brought outraged protesters from diverse backgrounds to the streets of many cities and has resulted in a national and international outcry for justice, an end to police violence against Black men and women, and a long overdue correction of this country’s deep racial inequalities.

These unprecedented crises call for enlightened and innovative leadership, inspired intervention, and compassionate service from all members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS).

We must work arduously to accelerate the elimination of the unacceptable inequities that pervade our health care system and our world at large. As the COVID-19 pandemic has painfully illustrated, these inequities, fostered by our society’s racism, keep African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities from receiving the accessible, high-quality care that every American deserves. Structural racism, manifested by deep inequities in housing, employment income, and education, contributes to a greater prevalence of underlying chronic conditions.

Moreover, as noted by the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine), even after adjusting for education and economic status, unequal treatment resulting from racial discrimination exacerbates health disparities. The result is a higher death rate from coronavirus infection and many other conditions. Police brutality against people of color further endangers the well-being, health, and lives of a great number of our patients. Correcting these injustices now, by denouncing racism and its deleterious effects on the health of Black and Brown people, is among the most important missions of the ACS.

As an organization that strives to inspire quality and create the highest standards and outcomes for the surgical community, the

ACS is committed to creating a more just and inclusive environment for everyone. Therefore, we will continue to work to ensure the development of a culturally competent and diverse surgical workforce to meet the health needs of our nation. We will continue to pursue our research and public health initiatives addressing health disparities. In addition, we will accelerate our advocacy efforts to bring much-needed legislative reform to correct factors that negatively affect the health of our patients and communities in order to ensure better outcomes for all human beings, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, creed, religion, nationality, or sexual preference.

### Fabrizio Michelassi, MD

Lewis Atterbury Stimson Professor of Surgery  
Chairman of Surgery, Weill Cornell Medicine  
Surgeon-in-Chief, NYP/WCMC



Dr. Michelassi concluded by affirming that The Department of Surgery stands strong in its support of all members of our community of patients and colleagues, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, religious beliefs, nationality, or sexual orientation. He also invited residents and faculty to join him in a 9-minute moment of silence organized by NYP-WCM.



Department of Surgery residents **Drs. Solange Bayard, Miseker Abate, Ben Lengel, Jake Connolly, Lama Obeid, Aziz Alkattan (NYP-Q), Pooja Shah, Claire Li, Johnny Stratigis, Greg Eckenrode, Caitlin Egan, Lamia Harik, Katherine Gray, Evan Lutton, Lissa Gilbert, Caitlin Finn, Misha Armstrong, Panpan Chen, Pranshant Angara and Alex Peters** marched in the “White Coats for Black Lives” demonstration on Saturday, June 6, 2020. Right now, in almost every major city in the U.S. (and quite a few around the world), protests are taking place that call for police reform and the support of Black lives. The mission of eliminating racism in the practice of medicine and recognizing racism as a threat to health and well-being of people of color has brought together healthcare providers, health organizations, and medical institutions to publicly recognize racism as a public health issue.

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**47<sup>th</sup> Annual Preston A. Wade M.D. Visiting Professor Lectureship**

## **“Disruptive Surgical Technology and Innovation Diffusion: A Framework for Navigating Product Delivery and Clinical Adoption”**

**Monday, May 11, 2020 | 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM | Zoom Meeting**



### **Todd E. Rasmussen, MD, FACS, Colonel UAF MC**

Professor of Surgery & Associate Dean for Clinical Research,  
F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine,  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and Attending Vascular Surgeon,  
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center & The National Institutes of Health  
Clinical Center, Bethesda, Maryland

The Department of Surgery's **47<sup>th</sup> Annual Preston A. Wade, M.D. Visiting Professor Lectureship** was held on Monday, May 11, 2020. The lecture entitled “Disruptive Surgical Technology and Innovation Diffusion: A Framework for Navigating Product Delivery and Clinical Adoption”, was presented by **Todd E. Rasmussen, MD, FACS, Colonel UAF MC**, Professor of Surgery & Associate Dean for Clinical Research, F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and Attending Vascular Surgeon, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center & The National Institutes of Health Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Colonel Todd Rasmussen completed his medical degree at Mayo Medical School in 1993 and surgical training at Wilford Hall Medical Center on Lackland Air Force Base in 1999. He returned to Mayo for vascular surgery training in 1999 after which he was assigned to the National Capital Area just before 9/11/2001. Soon after, he began caring for injured returning from Afghanistan at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

In 2004 Colonel Rasmussen returned to San Antonio and deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom at the Air Force Theater Hospital on Balad Air Base. Following this he initiated a vascular injury and hemorrhage control research and

innovation program. He's completed tours as a surgeon in Iraq and Afghanistan. Colonel Rasmussen has led surgical training missions in Morocco, Pakistan and Russia and his research efforts have resulted in 200+ publications, 25 book chapters, 2 textbooks and 4 patents. In 2012 he gave a TED talk on the transformation of military trauma care and its impact on medicine.

Colonel Rasmussen served as Deputy Commander of the Institute of Surgical Research from 2010 to 2013 and then directed the larger DoD Combat Casualty Care Research Program at Fort Detrick, Maryland. In 2017 he became Associate Dean for Research at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine – “America's Medical School” at the Uniformed Service University where he is Professor of Surgery. Colonel Rasmussen is attending vascular surgeon at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and consultant vascular surgeon and scientist at the National Institutes of Health.

*The Preston Wade M.D. Visiting Professor Lectureship was established in 1974 as a reminder of the importance of surgical expertise in the prevention of trauma and in the treatment of the trauma victim. After Dr. Wade's death in 1982, this lecture became a memorial to his life and his contributions.*



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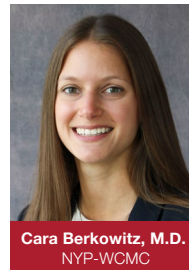
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## WCM Department of Surgery Teaching All Stars

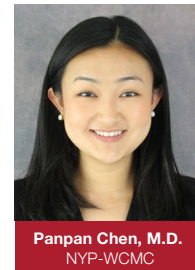
## WCM Department of Surgery Teaching All Stars

Over the past four years, we have been pleased to see a steep rise in the level of interest among Cornell medical students in the field of surgery, with a record 9 medical students applying for (and matching into) general surgery residency this year. This has been mirrored by a steep rise in the overall quality rating by the medical students for the surgery clerkship (3.20 in 2016, 3.70 in 2017, 3.93 in 2018, and 4.13 in 2019). This success is largely due to the passion for teaching that is exhibited on a daily basis by the residents and faculty members at each hospital.

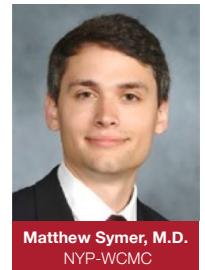
The medical school provides us with feedback on all of the surgery residents and faculty members on a biannual basis. We are pleased to start sharing some of this feedback by naming the inaugural class of **WCM Department of Surgery Teaching All Star** award recipients in an effort to recognize those who have been the heart and soul of this improvement. We congratulate ALL faculty and residents for all of the excellent teaching that you do, and for inspiring so many of our students to want to become surgeons, and we celebrate the following 10 people based on direct medical student feedback:



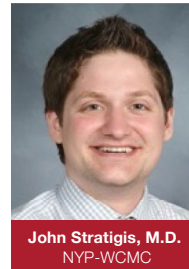
Cara Berkowitz, M.D.  
NYP-WCMC



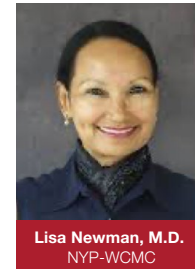
Panpan Chen, M.D.  
NYP-WCMC



Matthew Symer, M.D.  
NYP-WCMC



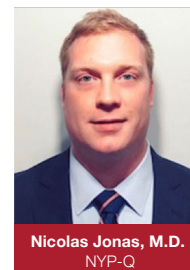
John Stratigis, M.D.  
NYP-WCMC



Lisa Newman, M.D.  
NYP-WCMC



Philip Chang, M.D.  
NYP-WCMC



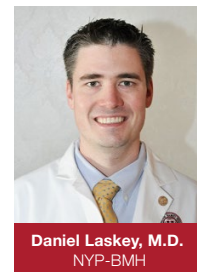
Nicolas Jonas, M.D.  
NYP-Q



Ingrid Schmiederer, MD  
NYP-Q



Christina Kwock, M.D.  
NYP-BMH



Daniel Laskey, M.D.  
NYP-BMH

**Congratulations to the inaugural class of  
WCM Department of Surgery  
Teaching All Stars!**

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## NYPH-WCMC DoS General Surgery Residency Program Graduation

Annual Faculty of the Year  
Teaching Award presented to  
**Omar Bellorin-Marin, MD**

### Annual Department of Surgery Award Presentations

5<sup>th</sup> Annual ABSITE Achievement Award  
presented to **Cara Berkowitz, MD** and  
**Kendall Lawrence, MD**

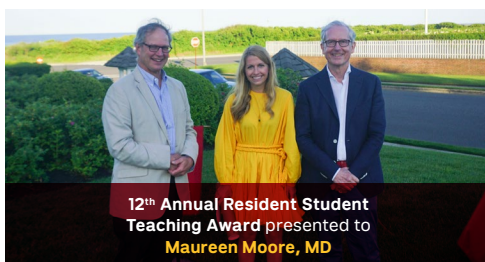
15<sup>th</sup> Annual William T. Stubenbord, M.D.,  
Resident Award presented to  
**Caitlin Finn, MD**

6<sup>th</sup> Annual Surgery Clerkship Resident Teaching  
Award presented to **Paul Shin, MD** and  
**Nicole Meredyth, MD**

The graduating chief residents presented the  
14<sup>th</sup> Annual Chief Residents Outstanding Intern  
Award to **Elizabeth Gilbert, MD**



19<sup>th</sup> Annual Hassan A. Naama, MB, BCh,  
Memorial Resident Award presented to  
**Katherine Gray, MD**



12<sup>th</sup> Annual Resident Student  
Teaching Award presented to  
**Maureen Moore, MD**



14<sup>th</sup> Annual Fabrizio Michelassi, MD,  
Chief Surgical Resident Award presented to  
**William Hammond, MD**



As we say good-bye to our 2020 general surgery program graduates, we want to acknowledge the next step in their careers:

**Dalia Alqunaibit, M.D.**

Surgical Critical Care  
Maimonides Medical Center

**Adham Elmously, M.D.**

Vascular Surgery Fellowship  
NewYork-Presbyterian

**William Hammond, M.D., M.Sc.**

Pediatric Surgery Fellowship  
University of Calgary

**Matthew Symer, M.D., M.S.**

Colon and Rectal Surgery Fellowship  
NewYork Presbyterian - Weill Cornell Medicine

**Dagny von Ahrens, M.D.**

Transplant Surgery Fellowship  
Mount Sinai, NY

**Katherine Gray, M.D.**

Thoracic Surgery Fellowship  
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

**Maureen Moore, M.D.**

Endocrine Surgery Fellowship  
NewYork Presbyterian - Weill Cornell Medicine



# SurgeryNews

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## NYPH-WCMC DoS General Surgery Residency Program Graduation



On Saturday, June 14, 2020, there was an intimate gathering to celebrate the graduation of our chief residents: **Dalia Alqunaibit, M.D., Adham Elmously, M.D., William Hammond, M.D., M.Sc., Matthew Symer, M.D., M.S., Dagny von Ahrens, M.D., Katherine Gray, M.D., Maureen Moore, M.D.** Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi, Lewis Atterbury Stimson Professor of Surgery and Chairman of Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine and Surgeon-in-Chief at NewYork- Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, delivered a meaningful and heartfelt address to the graduates. All remarks are transcribed here.

"We are here to acknowledge and celebrate the successes of each of our outstanding graduating Chief residents.



Yet, before we do that, I want to express our sincere gratitude to **Dr. Alex Swistel** and **Dr. Pat Miskowski** for opening the doors of their beautiful summer house here in NJ. As of ten days ago we still did not have a solution for where to hold this celebration which brings to closure a long time

in training. My wife and I were ready to have it at our place but the current directives prohibit gatherings of 10 or more in NY State; Dave Fehling was investigating going to a venue in Connecticut; then all of the sudden, Alex, you came through with a magnificent solution. Thank you. "Amazing things are happening here!"

Let me take this opportunity to offer a special recognition and toast to the parents, grandparents, siblings, spouses, significant others, friends, and extended families of each one of the graduates. Every

year I see the pride in their eyes and the joy in their voices. They all have contributed a great deal to this day and without their support it would have been difficult for each of you to reach this important moment in your professional life.

This has been a remarkable year for all of us and for the residency. We started with an in-depth review of the residency which culminated in the Educational retreat in February. We had a change in Program Director. Then a pandemic followed by economic hardship for many. Then the events of the last two weeks which challenged our sense of moral balance and national well-being. We are committed to attend to the internal aspirations of maintaining this residency as one of the premiere residencies in the States by realizing many of the good ideas that were suggested at the Educational retreat; we are also committed to advocate outside of the institution to advance much needed change to correct factors that negatively impact the health of our patients and communities in order to ensure better outcomes for all human beings, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, creed, religion, nationality, or sexual preference.

But for tonight we have only one item on the agenda: we are here to celebrate you, graduating chief residents, a class of men and women that stands above many others for what you have accomplished and done. We have a program suited to this unprecedented time which makes us reflect just for a minute on the fact that we are part of an unusual period in history, a time that none of us would have predicted or imagined 4 months ago, and events by which your residency has been defined.

Cheers!"



# SurgeryNews

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## NYPH-WCMC New Surgery Residents & Fellows

### NYPH - WCMC New Surgery Residents

#### General Surgery Categorical



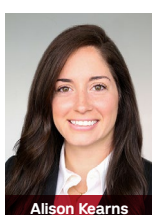
Arpit Gupta



Sarah Hatfield



Nitin Jethmalani



Alison Kearns



Teagan Marshall



Daniel Metzger



Bradley Pearson



Abhinav Tumati

#### General Surgery Preliminary



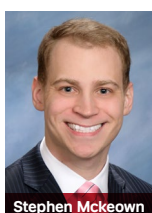
Omar Al Hussein



Aakanksha Gupta



Muhammad Khan

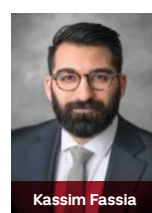


Stephen Mckeown



Alexia Stamatou

#### Interventional Radiology



Kassim Fassia

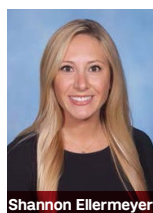


Mary Elizabeth  
McLaughlin



Mohammed  
Soliman

#### General Practice Residency Dentistry



Shannon Ellermeyer



Lauren M. Fafalak



Tal Kohn



Melanie Ma



Jennifer Rosenbaum

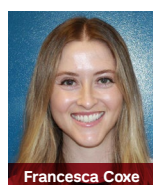


Sonya Shafique



Kayla Vasconcellos

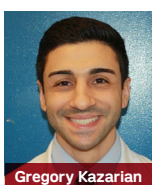
#### HSS Orthopaedic



Francesca Coxie



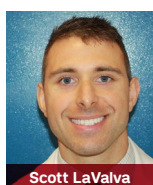
Heather Haeberle



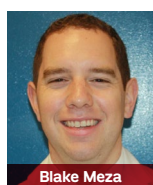
Gregory Kazarian



Kyle Kunze



Scott LaValva



Blake Meza



Karthik Nathan



Sreetha Sidharthan



Alexander White

# SurgeryNews

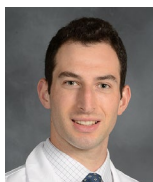
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## NYPH-WCMC New Surgery Residents & Fellows

### Neurosurgery



Umberto Tosi



Graham Winston

### Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery



Maciej Kosakowski



Michael Debitetto

### Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery



David Liao



Alexandra Michalowski



Michelle Yu



Victoria Xiao Yu

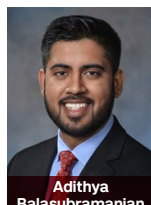
### Plastic Surgery



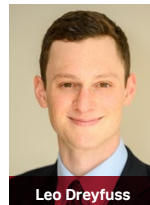
Matthew Wright



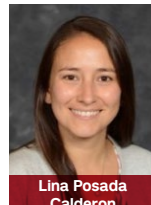
Albert Truong



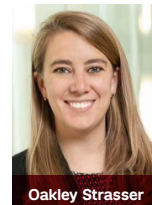
Adithya  
Balasubramanian



Leo Dreyfuss



Lina Posada  
Calderon



Oakley Strasser

### Urology

## NYPH - WCMC New Surgery Fellows

### Endocrine Surgery



Maureen Moore

### Advanced GI-MIS



James Senturk

### Burn Surgery



Lauren Nosanov



Brian Wengert

### Surgical Critical Care



Rachelle Lodestar

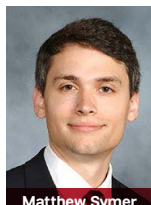


Mayo Fujii

### Colon & Rectal Surgery



Vernissia Tam



Matthew Symer

### Vascular Surgery



Nicole Rich



Adam Johnson



Adham Elmously



Jacob Schwartzman



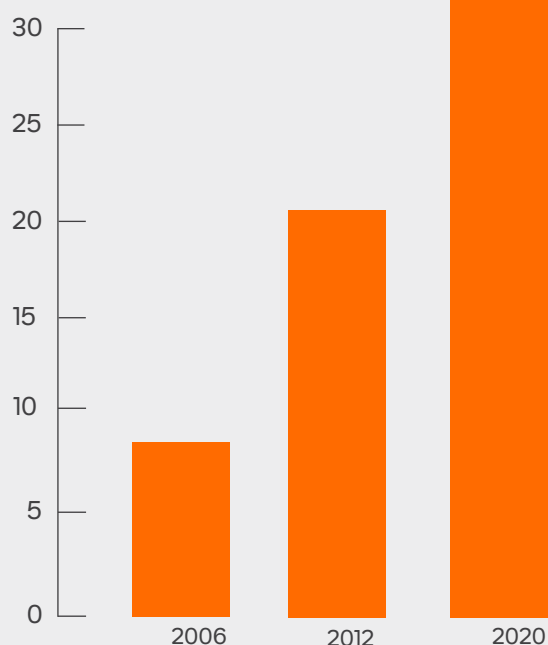
# SurgeryNews

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## Top Doctor Recognition

### NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine Department of Surgery Faculty Named Top Doctors by Castle Connolly

Faculty Named Top Doctors



17 of our full-time faculty were named  
**"America's Top Doctors 2020"**  
by Castle Connolly

Philip S. Barie, MD, MBA	Lisa Newman, MD
Gregory Dakin, MD	Benjamin Samstein, MD
Sharif Ellozy, MD	Darren B. Schneider, MD
Thomas J. Fahey III, MD	Rache M. Simmons, MD
Robert Grant, MD	Jason A. Spector, MD
Sandip Kapur, MD	Nitsana Spigland, MD
Michael D. Lieberman, MD	Alexander J. Swistel, MD
Fabrizio Michelassi, MD	Mia Talmor, MD
Jeffrey W. Milsom, MD	

32 of our full-time faculty were named  
**"Regional Top Doctor, 2020"**  
by Castle Connolly

Philip S. Barie, MD, MBA	Fabrizio Michelassi, MD
Peter Connolly, MD Gregory F. Dakin, MD	Jeffrey W. Milsom, MD
Sharif Ellozy, MD	Lisa Newman, MD
Thomas J. Fahey III, MD	David Otterburn, MD
James J. Gallagher, MD	Benjamin Samstein, MD
Kelly Garrett, MD	Darren B. Schneider, MD
Robert Grant, MD	Jian Shou, MD
Karim Halazun, MD	Rache M. Simmons, MD
Abraham P. Houg, MD	Jason A. Spector, MD
Daniel H. Hunt, MD	Nitsana Spigland, MD
Angela Kadenhe-Chiweshe, MD	Alexander J. Swistel, MD
Sandip Kapur, MD	Mia Talmor, MD
Tikva Jacobs, MD	Anthony Watkins, MD
Michael D. Lieberman, MD	Robert J. Winchell, MD
Jennifer Marti, MD	Heather Yeo, MD
	Rasa Zarnegar, MD

10 of our full-time faculty were named  
**"America's Top Doctors for Cancer, 2020"**  
by Castle Connolly

Thomas J. Fahey III, MD	Benjamin Samstein, MD
Michael D. Lieberman, MD	Rache M. Simmons, MD
Fabrizio Michelassi, MD	Nitsana Spigland, MD
Jeffrey W. Milsom, MD	Alexander J. Swistel, MD
Lisa Newman, MD	Mia Talmor, MD



# SurgeryNews

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## Top Doctor Recognition

41 of our full-time faculty were named **"New York Super Doctors, 2020"**

Cheguevara Afaneh, MD

Christopher Agrusa, MD

Philip S. Barie, MD, MBA

David Behrman, MD

Toni Beninato, MD

Rohit Chandwani, MD

Leslie E. Cohen, MD

Peter Connolly, MD

Rebecca Craig-Schapiro, MD

Gregory Dakin, MD

Sharif Ellozy, MD

Thomas J. Fahey III, MD

Maryam Farag, MD

Brendan Finnerty, MD

James J. Gallagher, MD

Kelly Garrett, MD

Robert Grant, MD

Karim Halazun, MD

Abraham Houn, MD

Daniel Hunt, MD

Sandip Kapur, MD

Anton Kelly, MD

Lea Lowenfeld, MD

Jennifer Marti, MD

Fabrizio Michelassi, MD

Jeffrey Milsom, MD

Lisa Newman, MD

P. Stephen Oh, MD

David Otterburn, MD

Gwendolyn Reeve, MD

Darren Schneider, MD

Jian Shou, MD

Jason A. Spector, MD

Nitsana Spigland, MD

Samuel Sultan, MD

Alexander J. Swistel, MD

Mia Talmor, MD

Robert J. Winchell, MD

Herrick Wun, MD

Heather Yeo, MD

Rasa Zarnegar, MD

5 of our full-time faculty were named to the **"New York Super Doctors Hall of Fame"**. This honor is awarded to individuals who have made it to ten or more separate annual 'Super Doctors' lists.

Thomas J. Fahey III, MD

Robert Grant, MD

Fabrizio Michelassi, MD

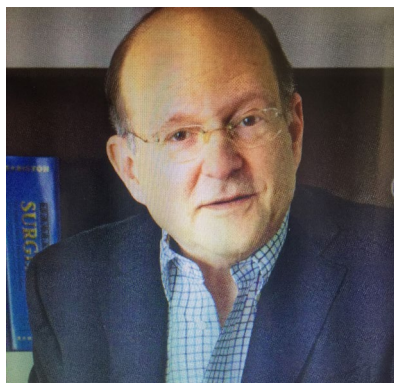
Jeffrey Milsom, MD

Alexander Swistel, MD

# SurgeryNews

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## Alumni Update



Congratulations, **Dr. Jose M. Fabrega, MD, FACS, FSSO (Mel)**, Chairman, The Paitilla Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Panama in Panama City and former Department of Surgery resident at the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center from 1969 to 1976 on being selected as an honorary fellow of the American College of Surgeons. This honor will be given to Dr. Fabrega at the 106th Annual Clinical Congress from October 4-8, 2020 in Chicago, Illinois. In selecting Dr. Fabrega for this distinction, the American College of Surgeons pays tribute to his outstanding achievements

in surgery, his international reputation, his distinguished humanitarian services and his past service as governor at large for the American College of Surgeons for two terms. Dr. Fabrega noted, "I owe this distinction to my mentor the late Dr. Paul Ebert (Chairman, Department of Surgery at The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center from 1971-1974). He arrived at New York Hospital and was an incredible human being and teacher who molded my life as a physician for good. I also owe this privilege and distinction to Dr. Frank Glenn then emeritus professor and the whole staff of that incredible institution". As a result of this honorary fellowship by the American College of Surgeons, Dr. Fabrega was recognized by the Panamanian Assembly (Panama senate) with a unanimous vote as a very meritorious citizen of the country.



**Elinore J. Kaufman, MD** (class of 2018), was featured on the *New York Times* for an opinion piece entitled "Please, Stop Shooting. We Need the Beds." Dr. Kaufman, a fellow in surgical critical care and trauma surgery at the University of Pennsylvania, penned a piece about coping with America's gun epidemic amid the coronavirus.

[Read the full article.](#)

Elinore Kaufman outside Penn Presbyterian Medical Center in Philadelphia.  
Credit: Mark Mekela for The New York Times.



# SurgeryNews

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## Alumni Update



### Introducing, Colette Finnerty!

Congratulations to **Drs. Leslie Cohen**, Assistant Professor of Surgery and Assistant Attending Surgeon at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian and **Brendan Finnerty**, Assistant Professor of Surgery and Assistant Attending Surgeon on the birth of their new baby!



### Welcome to the world little Matteo Luigi Agrusa!

Congratulations to **Dr. Oriana Petruolo**, Chief resident '19, and **Dr. Christopher Agrusa**, Assistant Attending Surgeon and Assistant Professor of Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian.

# SurgeryNews

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## Alumni Update

### A special thank you to our Department of Surgery Alumni who came to help at the height of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The support we received during this challenging time was nothing short of heroic! This list includes the following alumni:



Dr. Soumitra Eachempati



Dr. Sebastian Schubl



Dr. Jennifer Minneman



Dr. Michael S. Kent



Dr. Tracy R. Calvo-Bilski



Dr. Adam Hamawy



# SurgeryNews

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## Highlights of Scholarly Productivity & Awards



Congratulations, **Dr. Shuibing Chen**, Kilts Family Associate Professor of Surgery and Associate Professor, Department of Surgery and Department of Biochemistry at Weill Cornell Medicine on being **elected to tenure as Associate Professor of Chemical Biology in Surgery**, effective February 1, 2020. Tenure has been awarded in recognition of Dr. Chen's superlative performance in research and scholarship, and her exemplary commitment to teaching. Dr. Chen's pioneering work with stem cells and chemical biology is widely acclaimed and her accomplishments bring distinction to Weill Cornell Medicine.



**Payal Sharma, MSN, RN, FNP-BC, CBN**, Family Nurse Practitioner, Division of GI Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, Department of Surgery at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine, recently published two articles within Bariatric Times. One was entitled, [“Reducing Early Hospital Readmission Rates After Bariatric Surgery”](#) which demonstrates that developing innovative programs targeting high-risk patients could result in significant and achievable healthcare cost reduction. Given that nearly half of the early bariatric readmissions are due to preventable causes, close postoperative follow up might allow for early identification of high-risk patients. The other article was entitled, [“The Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2019”](#), which addresses the barriers to effective obesity treatment by enhancing Medicare beneficiary access to healthcare providers who are best suited to provide this therapy, including specialized nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists, dietitians, obesity medicine specialists, endocrinologists, bariatric surgeons, and psychologists or psychiatrists and permitting Medicare Part D to cover FDA-approved obesity drugs.



Wishing the best to **Emelita Lorenzo (Eme), RN, BSN** as she retires from her role as Senior Clinical Practice Nurse for Dr. Jeffrey Milsom. Eme was a dedicated staff member for over 10 years in the Department of Surgery. She was an exemplary employee and a pleasure to work with. Wishing you all the best, Eme!

# SurgeryNews

Volume 8 No. 1

## Highlights of Scholarly Productivity & Awards



**Dr. Thomas J. Fahey III**, Johnson and Johnson Professor and Vice-Chair, Department of Surgery, Chief, Endocrine Surgery and Director, Endocrine Oncology Program at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine was recently **featured on the podcast CancerCast, on the topic “The Spectrum of Thyroid Disease”**. Dr. Fahey discussed how physicians approach thyroid nodules and detect/treat thyroid cancer. The CancerCast podcast includes conversations about new developments in cancer care, research and medicine hosted by world-renowned hematologist and medical oncologist Dr. John Leonard. [Listen to the entire episode here.](#)



**Dr. Heather Yeo**, Assistant Professor of Surgery and Healthcare Policy and Research at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine, was **inducted as a member of the Society of University Surgeons (SUS) Social and Legislative Issues Committee at the 2020 Academic Surgical Congress** on February 4th in Orlando, Florida. The mission of the SUS is supporting and advancing leaders in academic surgery. With their dynamic history, poignant leadership, and pioneering programs in education and research, the society has created an undying legacy and an even more promising future.



**Sheila Maietta, MHA**, Administrative Manager for Fabrizio Michelassi, MD and Practice Administrator, Plastic Surgery and Surgical Oncology at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine, **completed her Master of Health Administration (MHA) program at Penn State University**. The Penn State MHA program uses a competency-based curriculum to prepare healthcare professionals at all levels of experience for leadership roles focused on improving health for individuals, populations, communities and the health service organizations that serve them.



# SurgeryNews

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## Highlights of Scholarly Productivity & Awards



**Drs. Lisa Newman**, Chief of the Section of Breast Surgery at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine and **Melissa Davis**, Assistant Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology and Scientific Director at Weill Cornell Medicine recently published a study within Clinical Cancer Research entitled, “**Racial Differences in the Association between Luminal Master Regulator Gene Expression Levels and Breast Cancer Survival**”. The data showed that even with clinically homogeneous tumor groups, regulatory networks that drive mammary luminal differentiation reveal race-specific differences in their association with clinical outcome. Understanding these biomarkers and their downstream regulons will elucidate the intrinsic mechanisms that drive racial disparities in breast cancer survival. [Review the entire study here.](#)



**Dr. Rebecca Craig-Schapiro**, Assistant Professor of Surgery and Assistant Attending Surgeon at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine was an invited speaker at the Vienna City of Science Symposium on March 19th at Weill Cornell Medicine on the topic of “**Kidney for a Kidney: Using Living Donation and Exchanges to Overcome the Organ Shortage**”. This event was hosted by Augustine M.K. Choi, MD, Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean, Weill Cornell Medicine and Wolfgang Aulitzsky, MD, Associate Dean for International Medicine and Distance Learning, Weill Cornell Medicine.



Wishing the best to **Barbara A. Glover, RN** as she retires from her role as Senior Clinical Practice Nurse for Dr. Michael D. Lieberman. Barbara was an exemplary staff member for over 16 years in the Department of Surgery. We appreciate all her hard work and dedication. Congratulations on your retirement!

# SurgeryNews

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## Highlights of Scholarly Productivity & Awards



**Dr. Rache Simmons**, associate dean for diversity and inclusion at Weill Cornell Medicine has been **named one of Crain's inaugural Notable Women in Talent in the Greater New York City area for her incredible achievements to support female physicians.** "I'm very flattered and honored to have been selected for this inaugural list," said Dr. Simmons, who is also the Anne K. and Edwin C. Weiskopf Professor of Surgical Oncology and a professor surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine, and a breast surgeon at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Dr. Simmons has advanced diversity efforts at Weill Cornell Medicine since 2009 and currently serves as the inaugural director of the Office of Women at Weill Cornell Medicine and co-chair of Women Physicians of NewYork-Presbyterian. Among her achievements, she helped to develop a paid parental leave policy and establish childcare facilities that are open to Weill Cornell Medicine's students, faculty and staff.



Congratulations, **Dr. Melissa Davis**, associate professor of cell and developmental biology research in surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine on being **featured in the May/June issue of Diversity in Action.** This article, entitled "Thinking Pink All Year Long", features Dr. Davis' work and the research initiatives at the ICSBCS. [Read the full article here.](#)



Congratulations, **Dr. Mayur Narayan**, Associate Professor of Surgery, Associate Program Director, Surgical Critical Care Fellowship and Surgical Director, Skills Acquisition & Innovation Lab on receiving a **faculty prize at this year's Convocation Awards!** [View the complete list of all the award winners here.](#)



# SurgeryNews

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## In Memoriam

### Dr. John Martin Aronian, III



each year during Weill Cornell Reunion weekend welcoming back surgical alumni with a series of lectures by fellow alum and faculty.

He was a beloved husband of Dr. Dianne Dilmaghani Aronian and father to the Hon. John M. Aronian IV, Esq. of North Salem, NY and and Peri Kristine Allen of Montauk, NY. He was beloved grandfather of four and brother to Bess Wray of Ambler, PA. A memorial service was held on Saturday, January 25, 2020 at Yorktown Community Church in Yorktown Heights, NY.

It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of our distinguished (former) colleague, **Dr. John Martin Aronian, III** who died suddenly on January 15, 2020 at 79 years of age. Dr. Aronian was on the full-time general surgery faculty and on the transplant service from 1972-2001, when he retired from practice. He also coordinated the annual Department of Surgery "Update your Surgery" program which was held

Donations in Dr. Aronian's memory may be made to: give.birds.cornell.edu in personal tribute to his years of care to endangered peregrine falcons which were located on the 24th floor ledge at New York Hospital. Dr. Aronian affectionately became known as ["The Birdman of New York Hospital" by the New York Post](#) in an article on May 12, 1999 outlining his retirement from New York Hospital.



### Dr. Lester W. Martin

We sadly share that **Dr. Lester W. Martin** died March 31, 2020, at the age of 96. Dr. Martin trained in surgery at Cornell and pediatric surgery with Robert E. Gross in Boston. He was instrumental in building the pediatric surgery department at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital where he was chief of surgery for 32 years.

He made many innovative contributions to the field including the eponymous

Lester Martin Pull Through Method, which eliminated the need for a child to use an ostomy bag. He also performed the first successful kidney transplant in Ohio, in June, 1965. His ten years of clinical work was published in an landmark article in the Annals of Surgery in 1977. Dr. Martin was a master technician and started one of the early pediatric surgery fellowship training programs. We extend our deepest condolences to his family.

# SurgeryNews

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## In Memoriam



### Dr. Peter Pressman

It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of our distinguished colleague of 20 years at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, **Dr. Peter Pressman**.

Several adjectives come immediately to mind when thinking of Dr. Pressman: innovative, meticulous, gentle, kind, dedicated, scholarly, generous, elegant...

Dr. Pressman joined the Department of Surgery at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine in 2000 as Professor of Clinical Surgery after having developed a most successful practice in breast surgical oncology over the previous 30 years. For the following two decades he played an instrumental role in the Section of Breast Surgical Oncology at our institution.

A pioneer in breast cancer surgery, Dr. Pressman was the quintessential surgeon, an innovator, a master surgeon. He was one of the earliest “general” surgeons who began specializing in breast surgery long before it became a specialty. Throughout his distinguished career as a breast surgical oncologist, Dr. Pressman made substantial contributions to the field of breast surgery by promoting less deforming surgical techniques that respect the patient’s body and result in esthetically less disfiguring, more pleasing outcomes. These less deforming procedures, coupled with his gentle, caring, reassuring approach to each patient, facilitated each patient’s recovery to complete healing, physical and psychological.

Educating was a priority for Dr. Peter Pressman, educating

both patients and health care providers alike. He was the co-author of the book “Breast Cancer - The Complete Guide”, a most popular book which went on for five editions. After retirement from clinical surgery, Dr. Pressman established the Genetic Risk Assessment Program at the Weill Cornell Breast Center and went on to educate countless women about their risk and their options, and helped all of them with their difficult decisions. Dr. Pressman was an equally charismatic and dedicated educator of medical students and residents. In the years following his clinical retirement, Dr. Pressman conducted a weekly teaching session on breast topics with surgical residents culminating with a memorable annual dinner which he and his wife Peggy hosted for these residents at their apartment.

Dr. Pressman was also dedicated to fostering progress in our understanding of breast cancer in the laboratory. Combining his interest and his generosity, he and his wife endowed the Peter I Pressman MD Professorship in Surgery. This Professorship supports all three missions of Weill Cornell Medicine – to care, to discover and to teach. Its holders embody the highest standards in academic medicine and continue the tradition of excellence in pursuit of answers to the most pressing issues we have in surgery today and in the future, as Dr. Pressman did all along.

Upon Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi’s recommendation, the Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine made him Clinical Professor Emeritus of Surgery in 2013 for his outstanding service, an honor reserved to a few. This recognition was based on Dr. Pressman’s meritorious and outstanding service to the Institution and the Department.

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## Future Events Calendar



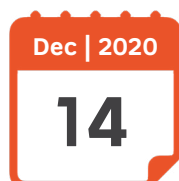
### 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Hassan Naama, MB, BCh, Memorial Lectureship

Lecturer | Dr. Michael Leitman



### 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Peter C. Canizaro, MD, Visiting Professor Lectureship

Lecturer | Dr. Rebecca Minter



### 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Benjamin S. Park, Jr., MD, Visiting Professor Lectureship

Lecturer | Dr. Diana Farmer



### Corrine & Maurice Greenberg International Visiting Professor Lectureship in honor of Peter Guida, MD

Lecturer | Dr. Andrew Hill



### 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Preston A. Wade Visiting Professor Lectureship

Lecturer | Dr. Ernest Moore

