Inaugural Dinner

Urology Celebrates Achieving Department Status

On October 8, 2008 the Department of Urology celebrated the transition from division to department status. Urology faculty, staff, and residents were joined by university and medical center leadership as well as local community leaders and friends of urology to acknowledge this important milestone. Department chairman, Dr. Robert Bahnson, expressed gratitude to individuals who collectively have made the department a success through service and philanthropy. Chester C. Winter and Henry A. Wise, II, Emeritus Professors of Urology and former Division Directors were presented with oil portraits in their honor. The portraits are on display in the patient care area and will remind others of their service to Ohio State and their commitment to urologic surgery. Tami Longaberger, CEO of The Longaberger Company, and her daughter Claire Kaido were in attendance to join us in acknowledging their father and grandfather’s generous donation to the department. The creation of the Dave Longaberger Endowed Chair in Urology has helped the department to achieve its mission to improve people’s lives through research,

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Education, and patient care. “What a profound sense of obligation we all feel to honor your father whose life was shortened so abruptly by kidney cancer. We are certain he is pleased to observe the fruition of your generous investment in us,” stated Dr. Bahnson.

Other honorees included Sara Lee Youngs, who endowed a lectureship in the disease that took her life; and Irv and Bonnie Babbert, whose gifts are an indication of their overall concern for the health and welfare of mankind. George Skestos was acknowledged as a great friend to Ohio State, a faithful believer in the OSU Medical Center and a humanitarian interested in personally donating to advance medicine to improve others lives. The Julius and Diana Skestos Chair in Urology will remind all of George’s love of people, the healing capacity of urologic surgery and his fervent affection for this great university.

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Appreciation was acknowledged for Manuel Tzagournis, Hagop Mekhjian, Dave Schuller, Dennis Smith, Chris Ellison and Bob Ruberg. Their patience, tolerance, and support have been critical aids on the department's path to respectability. A commitment was made to be even better through improvement and reaffirmation of core values. The prime importance of patient care was underscored. Patients are not an interruption of work, they are the purpose of it.

The department will continue to perform our clinical service with alacrity. “As teachers, we understand our integral role in the dissemination of urologic problem solving skill to students and residents. As scholars, we commit to the scientific inquiry which leads to improved treatments,” concluded Bahnson. “The department has a commitment to perform at the highest level so all who observe us will agree we are the flagship.”
Faculty in Focus:
Jason Gilleran, M.D.

It is estimated that 1 in 3 women will have a problem with incontinence at some point in their lives, and this number is likely to increase with the current aging population. Since joining the OSU Faculty in September 2005 as the Director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstruction, Dr. Jason Gilleran has focused his practice on addressing this troubling symptom, as well as other areas of pelvic floor dysfunction, including pelvic prolapse, bladder obstruction due to enlarged prostate and interstitial cystitis/painful bladder syndrome (IC/PBS). Dr. Gilleran specializes in the treatment of complex, refractory cases of incontinence and sees patients from all over central and southeastern Ohio. The Ohio State University Voiding Dysfunction Center offers advanced diagnostic testing, including videourodynamic which involves direct physician involvement to better identify the underlying cause and lead to focused treatment.

In addition, Dr. Gilleran maintains a tireless determination to help patients with even the most challenging clinical problems.

OSU Urology National Leaders in Resident Education in Robotics

Faculty members at Ohio State’s Department of Urology are leading the nation in resident training in robotic surgery. By helping develop a nationwide curriculum for resident training and introducing a national two-day program to introduce residents to the most up-to-date robotic techniques, OSU Urology has become a champion of resident robotic education.

Last year, Dr. Ronney Abaza, Director of Robotic Urologic Surgery at OSU, joined prominent robotic surgeons from around the country from several specialties as part of a working group to develop a resident training program in robotics. The group was convened at the California headquarters of Intuitive Surgical, the makers of the da Vinci robotic system used first at OSU in 1999 and now at medical centers around the world. The curriculum developed by the group was piloted at 10 training programs across the country this past year, including OSU Urology, which became the first resident training program in any specialty to have 100% of its residents complete the training modules under instruction from Dr. Abaza, Dr. David Sharp, and Dr. Ahmad Shabsigh.

Another milestone in resident education in robotics was reached when on March 20th and 21st the OSU Department of Urology hosted the first annual National Urology Resident Preceptorship in Robotic Urologic Surgery. This two-day program exposed residents...
from training programs around the country to the latest innovations and procedures in robotic surgery for urologic conditions. Because robotic surgery is still relatively new and many urology departments in the country are still learning robotic surgery, it has not become a part of all urology training programs such that many urology residents are graduating from their training with little or no exposure to robotics. This event was therefore designed by Dr. Abaza to allow OSU Urology to share its expertise in robotics with visiting residents so that they could return with new and exciting information for their colleagues and mentors.

The guest faculty included Dr. Mani Menon from Henry Ford Hospital, who pioneered robotic prostate cancer surgery, and Dr. Matthew Gettman from the Mayo Clinic, who published the first report on removal of kidney tumors robotically (partial nephrectomy). The local faculty included Dr. Abaza and the other members of OSU’s Urology Department performing robotic surgery for various conditions, including Dr. Sharp, Dr. Shab-sigh, Dr. Jason Gilleran, and Dr. Geoffrey Box.

OSU Urology hopes to continue this unique event on an annual basis as part of its continued commitment to education in addition to its mission of excellence in clinical care and research. In addition to preparing OSU’s own residents for robotic surgery through their training, OSU Urology aims to continue its role at the forefront of robotic education for residents on a national level.

Meet our Newest Residents

Ryan Novak, M.D.
I was very pleased with matching at OSU. I quickly learned during interviews that the Urology Department at OSU has an invaluable resource—its people and the leadership. The environment and culture within the department facilitates a rewarding and positive learning experience. It will provide a very sturdy platform from which I am able to continue my urology training for the next four years.

Matthew Johnson, M.D.
Once I realized that urology was the area of medicine that interested me most, the next step was identifying a residency program that embodied the ideals that would shape me into the type of urologist that I wanted to become. These ideals are hard work, compassionate care, and utmost professionalism. After my interview at the Ohio State University, I realized that this is a place where I could find collegial role models who personified these same ideals and I am ecstatic and eager for the opportunity to receive my urology training at THE Ohio State University.

Humberto Martinez-Swarez, M.D.
Before I began, I knew that the department of Urology at OSU placed heavy emphasis on professionalism and graduated surgical skills development. Thus far the program has exceeded my expectations in terms of its supportive and enthusiastic faculty, resident camaraderie, and overall excellence in patient care. I look forward to my residency and am confident that I will finish the program a well-trained urologist.
A Closer Look

Individuals with interstitial cystitis/painful bladder syndrome who would like to be evaluated for this study can contact Dr. Gilleran at 614-293-3648 or 614-293-8155.

Clinical Trials Now Recruiting

- Neurogenic Bladder Study
  Jason Gilleran, M.D.
  Contact: Lisa Hafer
  (614) 293-7877.

- Interstitial Cystitis Study
  Jason Gilleran, M.D.
  Contact: Jennifer Theadore
  (614) 293-3648.

- Renal Tumor Imaging Study
  Robert Bahnson, M.D.
  Contact: Cathy Mojzisik, RN, MS
  614-366-7937

Neurogenic Bladder Study

Dr. Jason Gilleran retains an academic interest in a number of female urology fields but one area of particular interest is studying a potential biomarker (i.e., blood test) for the condition of interstitial cystitis/painful bladder syndrome (IC/PBS). This condition is characterized by urinary urgency, frequency, and bladder pain. In conjunction with Dr. Tony Buffington from the College of Veterinary Medicine and Dr. Rodriguez-Saona from the Department of Food Science and Nutrition, a simple test has been developed to help distinguish between individuals with IC/PBS from those without the condition (“controls”) as well as those with other bladder conditions. The test has been refined to the point where one can be tested using only a few small drops of blood from a finger stick, which can be evaluated by a technique called “Near Infra-Red Spectroscopy.”

AUAF Research Grant Awarded

Imaging Prostate Cancer Biomarkers

Guang Jia, Ph.D., a Post-Doctoral Researcher in Biophysics and Radiology, recently received a grant from the American Urological Association Foundation (AUAF). The proposal was to examine the ability of amide-proton transfer MRI to diagnose prostate cancer in situ with a noninvasive approach. The project involves imaging a small number (30) of prostate cancer patients to assess the levels of “Mobile Proteins” in prostate tumors and their ability to serve as a biomarker of prostate cancer. The AUAF stated that OSU’s training facility was the “strength of the proposal.” Dr. Jia will be co-mentored by Drs. Michael Knopp, a Professor at OSU and Dr. Robert Bahnson, Professor and Chair of Urology at OSU. According to the AUAF, “Both mentors are felt to be of extremely high caliber and the co-mentorship identifies a unique potential mentoring environment that could nurture the development of new imaging technologies for Urology.”
Grateful Patient

Erv & Bonnie Babbert

When Ervin and Bonnie Babbert were invited to the recent department celebration, they thought it was in honor of Dr. Bahnson, so they were surprised when he recognized them for their donations to the department.

Mr. Babbert has been a patient of Dr. Robert Bahnson’s since 1998. Erv recalls when he first met Dr. Bahnson, he wouldn’t say a word, but then “we got on a roll” he stated. Mr. Babbert was referred to Dr. Bahnson by a family friend in 1998 when the physician he was seeing left town. Dr. Bahnson encouraged him to stop smoking. Ervin had six operations and is doing well today. Bonnie had told Dr. Bahnson that she wanted to keep Erv healthy until their 50th anniversary, and he has given her that plus an extra five years. They both appreciate the fact that Dr. Bahnson has always explained things. He always makes sure to include Bonnie in conversations about Erv’s patient care.

The urology staff are “like family” and “have been wonderful”, stated the Babberts. With Urology becoming a department and the addition of new faculty, Mr. Babbert stated that “they couldn’t have picked a better guy to do it”, he further stated that Dr. Bahnson “has a knack of getting good people.” Ervin and Bonnie Babbert were married at 19 and founded a company, E.C. Babbert, Inc., in 1960. During the early days of the company they mostly installed septic tanks, pumps, and softeners. When the city of Columbus needed concrete barriers for a downtown sport car race E.C. Babbert was awarded the contract, placing the business on its road to big success.

The Babberts state that they use money from investments to support Hospice and Children’s Hospital as well as their continued donations to the Department of Urology. “We are living well, we would rather give to good people than hoard,” states Bonnie Babbert.

If you want a good urologist go to Dr. Bahnson. I would recommend him to anyone.”

Patient Profile

Richard Ronevich

Richard Ronevich, a man of simple faith, feels his faith has been rewarded. He wants to make sure others are aware of the InterStim and how the physicians at OSU Urology can help.

Richard has lived with urinary problems for 18 years. In addition he battles reflex sympathetic dystrophy and fibromyalgia. He had a suprapubic catheter placed in February 1989. About seven months later the spasms began. At times they were so bad they put him in the fetal position. He was hospitalized multiple times for infections. At one point the doctor couldn’t do a cystoscopy because of the spasms.

He lived 10 years with a catheter and was worried about bladder cancer. When he came to OSU Urology, he was seen by Dr. Jason Gilleran. Dr. Gilleran discussed the option for the InterStem, but cautioned Richard not to be overly optimistic since he had the catheter for so long and was worried there may be additional damage. When Dr. Gilleran implanted the device the outcome was better than anticipated. Richard said, “I could kiss his hands. His hands did the job. I got a whole new life.” He shared a simple example of taking a shower. He used to have to clamp off and disconnect the catheter. Now he doesn’t. “I have to retrain myself; my bladder is the size of a 2 year-old.”

Richard lives on a small 12 acre farm, about 20 minutes from Wheeling, West Virginia, in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio. He showed dogs and poultry and hopes to get back to his hobby. He is a eucharistic minister at St. Josephs Catholic Church. One day after mass when he was cleaning up and putting vessels away, he noticed he was wet through his robe, even through his depends. He felt he had to stop assisting with services; his bladder spasms caused him to pull away from going to church. “If it wasn’t for my faith, I don’t know how I would have gotten through,” Richard noted. Richard offered, “If sharing my experience can help anyone, by all means they should consider seeing the Urology team at Ohio State and consider this treatment option.”

“If you want a good urologist go to Dr. Bahnson. I would recommend him to anyone.”
2009 Sara Lee Youngs Visiting Professor

Harry Herr, M.D.

Dr. Harry W. Herr, MD, FACS from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center presented a lecture on Optimal therapy of muscle-invasive bladder cancer at a recent Grand Rounds. Dr. Herr is a urologic surgeon specializing in bladder cancer. His expertise is in devising treatment strategies designed to cure and improve the quality of life of patients with bladder cancer. Dr. Herr’s lecture was followed by case presentations by the urology residents encouraging Dr. Herr’s views of the current level of evidence and opinions of various topics in bladder cancer.