



2009-2010 Officer Profiles

Nora Burgess, MD WTS President

Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, San Francisco, CA
Cardiothoracic surgical specialty: Adult acquired heart disease,
College: Brown University
Medical School: Brown University
General Surgery Residency: University of Massachusetts at Berkshire Medical Center and Worcester, MA.
CT Surgery Residency: Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York, NY

Professional Life

I have been in practice since 1984 at KP-SFO in the field of acquired adult heart disease with special interests in mitral valve repair and off pump coronary revascularization. I currently also serve as an Assistant Physician in Chief for our medical center with particular assignments in finance and strategic planning. I am also privileged to serve currently as President, Women in Thoracic Surgery in our efforts to advance the engagement and professional development of women in this exciting field.

Personal Life

I grew up on the North Shore of Boston and came to San Francisco after training to work in a new CT surgical department where the steep growth curve offered especially attractive opportunities to help build a successful group practice. I was also attracted by the staff model of the Kaiser Permanente pre-paid HMO system which makes all medically indicated care available to patients based upon medical need [and not based upon fee for service practice/limited coverage insurance models]. My husband worked for many years at UC-Lawrence Berkeley Labs, and now has a second career as a freelance patent agent. This offers us time flexibility to travel widely, and to pursue many shared interests such as scuba diving and sailing.

Yolonda L. Colson, MD, PhD WTS Vice President

Brigham and Women's Hospital
College: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY 1983
Medical School: Mayo Medical School, Rochester, MN 1989
General Surgery Residency: University Health Center of Pittsburgh,
CT Surgery Residency: Brigham & Women's Hospital,
Other: Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Surgery, University of Pittsburgh

Professional Life

Characterization of micrometastatic nodal disease in lung cancer through the real-time identification of sentinel lymph nodes in lung cancer patients using near-infrared imaging: This NCI-funded Phase I/II clinical trial explores the clinical application of an optical imaging technology that uses safe, invisible near-infrared (NIR) fluorescent light to permit SLN identification via real-time image guidance during surgery. Optimized NIR fluorescent lymphotropic contrast agents have been developed to permit nonradioactive real-time lymphatic mapping and we have enhanced and validated the technology in large animal models. Our hypothesis is that real-time image-guided detection and excision of the tumor-specific SLN using NIR fluorescent technology will provide a safe

and clinically applicable means to improve surgical staging with therapeutic benefit to patients with early stage lung cancer.

Design and validation of drug-eluting polymers for peri-operative locoregional drug delivery: Currently the primary focus is the development and testing of novel drug delivery platforms for administering chemotherapeutic agents in a controlled and targeted manner in order to prevent the locoregional recurrence of cancers following surgical resection either at the suture line or within regional lymph nodes. We have generated numerous polymer constructs that effectively encapsulate several chemotherapy drugs (i.e. Paclitaxel, 10-hydroxycamptothecin) with subsequent time- and chemical-mediated release profiles. The two main avenues of research are oriented towards polymer nanoparticles with pH-sensitive intracellular drug release mechanisms and copolymer films capable of long-term drug elution and biocompatibility. Cancer models include standard subcutaneous and intraperitoneal tumor models and a unique model for tumor recurrence in which our copolymer films loaded with paclitaxel have proven effective at preventing growth of recurrent disease following resection of primary tumor nodules. Furthermore, we have recently begun working on large animal (porcine) models to explore real-time imaging of these nanoparticles as they migrate through lymphatic channels to deliver the encapsulated payload within regional lymph nodes.

Personal Life

Please see page 2 of the Fall 2007 issue of the *Oracle*:
http://www.wtsnet.org/documents/PDF/WTS_07Fall.pdf

Kathleen Fenton, MD

***Oracle* Editor**

International Children's Heart Foundation

Cardiothoracic surgical specialty: Congenital heart surgery

College: Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore (BA Natural Science Area)

Medical School: University of Maryland (Baltimore)

General Surgery Residency: University of Louisville

CT Surgery Residency: Emory University

Congenital fellowships: UCSF, Children's Hospital Pittsburgh

Professional Life

I am currently working for the International Children's Heart Foundation

(www.babyheart.org); I live and work in Managua, Nicaragua, where we are trying to establish a cardiac surgery program for children (www.corazon-abierto.org). My work includes not only operating and taking care of patients, but also mentoring the local team and working directly with domestic and international benefactors. This has been and remains a tremendous experience for me both professionally and personally. Interested students or residents are welcome to visit me in Nicaragua or to apply to make a trip with an ICHF team. Contact me directly or the ICHF. My background is in academic medicine, including research and teaching. My research interests include fetal cardiac surgery as well as clinical investigations in single ventricle physiology and in cerebral oximetry for pediatric heart surgery.

Personal Life

I was born in Washington, DC, and raised in Silver Spring, MD. My interest in medicine probably springs from my father's work as a pharmacist. I have two younger brothers, one who is a telecommunications specialist and the other who is a Catholic priest.

I am single, but do not feel that this description at all reflects the fullness and depth of my life. Although of course, like any surgeon, the majority of my time is devoted to my work, which I love, I have sought and found time to pursue other interests as well. I often use my vacation time to take classes in philosophy, theology or ethics; for many years these have been at conference centers affiliated with Opus Dei in various U.S. and international locations. This has been a great opportunity to meet other professional women with similar interests, and what I learn not only helps me in my own life and professional work, but I am subsequently able to pass this knowledge on to others. For example, last summer I taught a class on Bioethics to young professionals in Nicaragua,

and I am presently helping to organize a health care center for low income families. I also love scuba diving and choral music (which has to be hard enough to make me concentrate on singing so that I stop thinking about work!).

Kristine J. Guleserian, MD

WTS Member-at-Large

Children's Medical Center/UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX

Cardiothoracic surgical specialty: Pediatric cardiothoracic surgery

College: Harvard College

Medical School: Boston University School of Medicine

General Surgery Residency: Rhode Island Hospital, Brown University School of Medicine

CT Surgery Residency: Barnes-Jewish Hospital, Washington University School of Medicine

Fellowships: Cardiovascular tissue engineering, Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard

Medical School; Congenital cardiac surgery Fellowship, Children's Hospital Boston,

Harvard Medical School

Professional Life

Assistant Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, TX. Surgical Director of Pediatric Cardiac Transplantation at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Clinical/research interests: pediatric cardiac transplantation/mechanical circulatory support; cardiovascular tissue engineering; cardiac embryology and development; perfusion strategies for congenital heart surgery; minimally invasive pediatric cardiac and thoracic surgery; and pulmonary atresia/intact ventricular septum.

Personal Life

Dr. Guleserian is single/not married, and enjoys contemporary art and architecture, off-shore fishing, skiing, running, travel, and culinary art.

Virginia (Ginny) R. Litle, MD

WTS Web site editor

Thoracic and Foregut Surgery, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

Cardiothoracic surgical specialty: general thoracic surgery

College: University of Vermont

Medical School: Brown-Dartmouth

General Surgery Residency: University of California, San Francisco

Fellowship: Surgical Oncology, University of Pittsburgh

CT Surgery Residency: University of Pittsburgh

Professional Life

I specialize in general thoracic surgery but have a particular interest in minimally invasive esophageal surgery given my training in Pittsburgh. I contribute to clinical research projects but prefer to focus on translational research efforts, which of course involve larger chunks of time (and the ever-requisite self-discipline). My current NCI-funded project involves microRNA characterization of Barrett's esophagus and esophageal and gastric cancers. I am also working on getting intergroup trials going on here for lung brachytherapy and RFA. Professionally I am happiest doing: 1) a laparoscopic esophageal case and even happier when I can take a resident through one with me as their first assistant; or 2) discussing esophageal research with my husband and new esophageal colleagues at URMC.

Personal Life

Three young children, one 40-something husband and one aging dog. Most of my free time is spent with family, playing tennis, running, and doing yoga. After living outside NYC for four years, I now live within 10-15 minutes of work so I can maximize home time and minimize commute time.

Mary Maish, MD, MPH

WTS Member-at-Large

Thoracic and Foregut Surgery at UCLA

College: Northwestern University

Medical School: Rush Medical College

General Surgery Residency: University of Pennsylvania Affiliated Programs
CT Surgery Residency: Baylor College of Medicine
Fellowships: USC Thoracic and Foregut Fellowship

Professional Life

My clinical practice is a well-rounded practice that includes patients with benign and malignant diseases of the chest and foregut. My main focus is complex esophageal disorders and I have a number of clinical and research projects relating to this area. I have initiated tissue engineering research that is progressing towards designing a neo-esophagus using stem-cell technology. I am both the Associate Program Director for the Cardiothoracic Residency Program and administrate the rotations for the general surgery residents and medical students.

Personal Life

I was born as an expatriated American in Milan, Italy, and was raised in Italy, England, and Switzerland before coming to the U.S. I remain unmarried without children; however, I have a very devoted dog that I have trained for agility competitions that we do on a regular basis. I am a musician and continue my involvement in the Doctor's orchestra. I am also an avid snow and water skier and indulge in these sports in alternating seasons.

Meena Nathan, MD

WTS Member-at-Large

Meena Nathan MD received her Medical degree from University of Madras, India. She subsequently completed training in the United Kingdom and received FRCS from the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh and Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians, Glasgow. She completed her general surgery and cardiac surgery training at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard University. Her pediatric Cardiac Surgical training was at Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard University. She joined the staff of Children's Heart Center, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in fall of 2006. Her research experience includes basic research in mitochondrial role in cardiac hypertrophy and failure supported by a grant from the Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education. In addition to clinical outcomes research, she plans to pursue her research interest in the cellular basis of cardiac failure with special interest in right ventricular failure. She is a member of numerous professional societies including the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, Women in Thoracic Surgery, American Medical Association, American College of Surgeons, Association of Academic Surgeons, and Massachusetts Medical Society. She has several publications in peer reviewed journal and numerous presentations at national meetings. Her clinical interests include all aspects of congenital surgery with special interest in neonatal surgery and adult congenital surgery.

Patricia (Patty) Ann Thistlethwaite, MD, PhD

WTS Board of Directors

Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, University of California, San Diego
Specialty: Adult cardiac and thoracic surgery
College: Stanford University
Medical School: Harvard Medical School
General Surgery Residency: Massachusetts General Hospital
CT Surgery Residency: University of Pittsburgh

Professional Life

Dr. Thistlethwaite is a cardiothoracic surgeon and researcher who specializes in adult cardiac surgery and molecular biology. She performs a full range of cardiothoracic operations, including heart and lung transplantation, general thoracic operations, coronary artery bypass surgery, and valve repair and replacement.

Dr. Thistlethwaite is head of a molecular biology laboratory in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. Her research focuses on molecular causes of pulmonary hypertension, mechanisms of coronary arterial and venous differentiation and angiogenesis, and the genetics of cardiac development. She leads a number of major investigations including several National Institutes of Health-funded studies and a

Center for Medical Research and Education Fund (CMREF) project studying the causes, prevention, and treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension.

As Program Director of the UCSD Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery Residency Program, Dr. Thistlethwaite is one of the first women in the United States to be a cardiothoracic surgery program director. She was elected to the American Association of Thoracic Surgery in 2006, and has been an editor of the Annals of Thoracic Surgery since 2007.

Personal Life

Dr. Thistlethwaite's hobbies include gardening, reading, playing the piano.

Betty Tong, MD

WTS Member-at-Large

Dr. Betty Tong earned Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Mechanical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and her M.D. from Duke University. She trained in General Surgery at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. She then returned to Duke University for her residency in Cardiothoracic Surgery. Upon completion of her Thoracic training, Dr. Tong joined the faculty in the Division of Thoracic Surgery. Her clinical interests include lung cancer, esophageal cancer, pulmonary metastasectomy, benign thoracic conditions and minimally invasive thoracic surgery.

Concurrently, Dr. Tong is pursuing a Master of Health Sciences in the Graduate Training Program in Clinical Investigation (GTPCI) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her research interests include gender differences in the treatment and outcomes for patients with lung cancer, clinical studies for lung and esophageal cancer, and the role of palliative care in caring for surgical ICU patients.

Jennifer D. Walker, MD

WTS Member-at-Large

Cardiothoracic surgical specialty: Cardiac surgery
Director of Education and Simulation for Students and Residents, Cardiac Surgical Service, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
College: University of South Carolina, Aiken
Medical School: Medical University of South Carolina
General Surgery and research: Medical University of South Carolina
CT Surgery Residency: Massachusetts General Hospital

Professional Life

I am a clinical cardiac surgeon. My major focus is resident and student education. I do a lot of intraoperative teaching and I mentor students from the high school level upward. I teach in local schools and colleges and at Harvard Medical School. I run a cardiac simulation teaching lab. I perform all types of cardiac operations.

Personal Life

I was born in Delaware and moved to South Carolina as a child. I grew up in Aiken and lived on a farm. I moved to Charleston after college to go to medical school and to do my residency. I met my husband at the end of my cardiac training program and was married in May 2005. I love to hike, take spin classes at the gym, and work out. I love to work in the yard and landscape. My husband and I collect wine and do a lot of gourmet cooking. We are very involved in helping my husband's aging mother care for her home and yard. I am available for mentoring or for advice, and can be reached by phone at work: (617) 726-8841; or e-mail: jdw8@comcast.net.

Yvonne M. Carter, MD

WTS Member-at-Large

Cardiothoracic Surgery specialties: thoracic oncology, thoracic transplant, minimally invasive thoracic surgery, and outcome disparities in cardiothoracic surgery
Georgetown University Medical Center
College: University of California, Berkeley
Medical School: Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons

General Surgery Residency: University of Washington
CT Surgery Residency: The Ohio State University
Other Fellowships: University of California, San Francisco (thoracic oncology); Duke University (thoracic transplant)

Professional Life

My current clinical practice is in general thoracic surgery and some involvement in a local heart transplant program. The majority of patients have esophageal or lung cancer, pediatric thoracic tumors, and benign thoracic tumors (i.e., thymoma, substernal goiter). I am actively involved in medical student education, as well as education in the general surgery residency. My research efforts are focused on developing an educational simulator for use in teaching cardiothoracic surgery skills, and translational research involving aerodigestive tumors in HIV seropositive patients.

Personal Life

I am a native of southern California, and now reside in Washington, DC. I love to participate in sports (snowboarding, running, mountain biking). I recently started to learn the game of golf, but am still in pursuit of the sub - 3 hour marathon. Additionally, I enjoy shopping, movies, and traveling. I am involved in local philanthropy efforts focused on enhancing the lives of the homeless and assisting college-bound students.

Joanne P. Starr MD

WTS Member-at-Large

Congenital Heart Surgeon

Former Director of Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgeon at Children's Hospital of New Jersey. Presently working with International Children's Heart Foundation providing surgical care to children in third-world countries. Joanne graduated from NY Medical College and completed her general surgery and cardiothoracic residencies at NY Presbyterian-Columbia University. She then completed a fellowship in congenital heart surgery at Childrens Hospital in Seattle. She has practiced congenital heart surgery exclusively since 1999. She is an active member of WTS. In addition to being a congenital heart surgeon Joanne is married, has three children and one grandchild. For research interests please search "Starr JP" on PubMed. Dr. Starr can be reached at Starrdoc28@aol.com or starrdoc28@gmail.com.