



DENTISTRY AND
ORAL HEALTH
DR. ADHAM FARES



THE LIFE OF A
SCIENTIST
DR. TARA KLASSEN

WINTER 2023/2024

The Blade

The Department of Surgery

CUMMING SCHOOL
OF MEDICINE



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY



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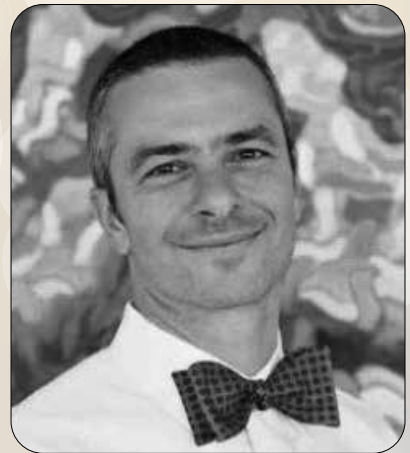
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We wish to thank all surgeons, administrators, and team members whose efforts made this issue possible.

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IN MEMORY OF
DR. SEAN GRONDIN
DR. WARREN YUNKER
DR. FABIO FERRI-DE-BARROS



As we mark the one-year anniversary of the tragic losses of Dr. Sean Grondin and Dr. Warren Yunker and almost six months since the tragic passing of Dr. Fabio Ferri-de-Barros, we would like to take a moment to remember our colleagues.

They were each distinguished surgeons and leaders. They were valued colleagues, and many in our department and beyond were lucky to consider them friends. They were important members of our University of Calgary and Alberta Health Services communities, and their absence has affected all of us profoundly.

As we navigate our path forward, we reflect on our own wellness, how we can support one another, and the importance of community. Sean, Warren, and Fabio are deeply missed.



MESSAGE FROM **DR. KEVIN HILDEBRAND,** DEPARTMENT HEAD



I want to begin this edition of the Blade by acknowledging the passing of our colleagues, Dr. Sean Grondin, Dr. Warren Yunker, and most recently, Dr. Fabio Ferride-Barros. The sudden passing of three esteemed colleagues in such a short time has been challenging for us as a department and as individuals. We had not fully grieved the loss of one friend before we had to face the loss of yet another. It has been an overwhelming experience, and though I am inspired by the resilience of our members, I also appreciate how difficult it has been. I again express my condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of our recently passed members.

Physician and trainee wellness is a department priority, and I am happy to report that it is embedded in the department's new strategic plan. The 2024-2029 plan focuses on the foundational aspects of education, research, and quality improvement while venturing into new areas, such as resource stewardship. The plan was distributed to all members for feedback in the fall, and this feedback is now being incorporated into the plan. Thank you for your contributions, and I expect the final 2024-2029 strategic plan to be sent to members before the end of the year.

I look forward to collaborating with colleagues as we tackle new directions to improve the department for everyone.

And lastly, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the Department of Surgery at the University of Alberta for celebrating 100 years of service to the community. Many of our colleagues are alums from this institution, and I'm sure they share in the pride of this accomplishment. Please accept our congratulations.

As we prepare to move into 2024, I want to encourage everyone to continue looking out for each other, and if you are struggling, please reach out for support. AHS and the university have a number of resources, and our peer support team is always available. Please check the department newsletter or our website under physician resources for more information.

Though we still have challenges to overcome, I look forward to collaborating with colleagues as we tackle new directions to improve the department for everyone. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Blade. Please take care of yourself and each other.

Sincerely,
Dr. Kevin Hildebrand, Department Head

UPDATE FROM **DR. FRANKIE FRAULIN,** DEPUTY DEPARTMENT HEAD, GOVERNANCE AND PHYSICIAN SERVICES



Recruiting new surgeons into the Department of Surgery is one of the most important things we do. It ensures our future, with new surgeons bringing new ideas and new energy. They not only help with workforce issues and patient care, but they educate trainees, elevate the quality of our work, and conduct innovative research to advance healthcare.

Our department is one of the largest surgical departments in North America. We have a diverse group of over 350 members, and we are facing an aging group of surgeons, many of whom are preparing to retire. We also have significant pressure to increase productivity and decrease wait times while trying to address physician burnout. It is recognized nationwide that the average number of hours worked by physicians is decreasing¹, and we see this as an opportunity for our trainees who will soon be looking for employment. Our work environment will evolve and shift in the coming years, helping staff maintain work-life balance and reducing physician burnout. The future is positive.

Recruitment begins with workforce planning, and the best hiring processes are planned long in advance. In an ideal situation, the workforce need is identified, and the entire clinical working group agrees to hire a new surgeon, with the process usually initiated by the site lead of the clinical working group.

We currently have three routes to hiring into the AHS clinical environment: replacement of a surgeon (one in, one out), adding an additional surgeon to a group

(a new hire shares the current workload), and hiring a job share (a new surgeon is brought in at less than 1.0 FTE). A job share is the newest option we are exploring. It will allow one or two surgeons to reduce their clinical workload (FTE) and share resources with the recruit.

Once the need is identified and the clinical working group agrees, the site lead obtains approval from the Section Chief, followed by the Department Head. A stepwise process is then initiated involving the Deputy Department Head of Physician Services and Governance, Department Manager, Contracts Coordinator, and Privileging Coordinator. The process is detailed and thorough, involving an impact analysis, advertising, organizing a search and selection committee, interviewing, recommendations and approvals, letter of offer, and appointment and privileging. With the assistance of the Department Member Liaison, we observe the principles of diversity and identify any conflicts of interest throughout the process. The entire hiring process can take six to nine months.

We want to attract the most qualified individuals and increase our diversity. Over the last three and a half years, we have hired more surgeons each year and proportionately more female surgeons. Since 2020, 21 out of 50 surgeons hired were female, and the first half of 2023 saw 50% of new hires being female. With our new strategic plan, we will continue this progress with a stronger focus on other types of diversity to ensure that the department represents the populations it serves. We want our members to feel connected and committed to our community, and we want their practices to grow and thrive. Most surgeons hired into Calgary will spend their entire career here, so we recognize the importance of continually evaluating and improving the recruitment process. We want to get it right.

Please join us in celebrating our new surgeons. You can find profiles of our new faculty beginning on page 22. If you have questions or want to initiate a new hire, I am happy to guide you through the process.

Dr. Frankie Fraulin
Deputy Department Head, Physician Services and Governance

1. Islam R, Kralj B, Sweetman A, Physician Workforce planning in Canada: the importance of accounting for population aging and changing physician hours of work, CMAJ 2023 March 6: 195: E335-40. doi:10.1503/cmaj.221239

UPDATE FROM **DR. NATALIE YANCHAR,** DEPUTY DEPARTMENT HEAD, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, WELLNESS, AND PROFESSIONALISM



As I sat down to write this update, I reflected on the tragic losses we had this past year. However, I am heartened by the openness of our department to acknowledge the deaths of our colleagues and the wake-up call this has triggered regarding the importance of addressing wellness in our surgical community.

But what can we do? As a department, we have held a wellness speaker series on suicide, addictions, and electronic medical records (EMRs) impact on mental health. We continue to advertise learning opportunities related to physician mental health. We also recognize that everyone is doing their best to adapt to life in a post-COVID and environmentally challenged world, dealing with frustrations from a new EMR and the stresses of acute care coverage gaps. Guidelines are being developed to help us when we need to step away from this chaos or reduce our workloads. In addition, a survey launched this fall in partnership with Well Doc Alberta to examine sources of stress and contributors to burnout within the department. This will be followed up with a retreat open to

I want to express how proud I am of the many members who have embraced the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusivity within our workplaces, amongst our colleagues and with our patients.

all department members in late winter to examine the results and collaboratively identify other areas we must address. Those are the department's initiatives, but on an individual level, we can recognize that none of us are invulnerable and that reaching out for help when needed is a sign of strength.

I am heartened when I see how far we have come. Firmly entwining wellness, EDIA, and professionalism into our new strategic plan will help form a framework of where we need to be as we move forward.

I also want to express how proud I am of the many members who have embraced the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusivity within our workplaces, amongst our colleagues, and with our patients. Many have taken courses on implicit bias. We have introduced guidelines to reduce bias in search and selection committees. We also had over 25% participation in our 2023 membership engagement survey. This exercise demonstrated significant gender gaps regarding perceptions of trust, respect, diversity recognition, and discrimination. Though this is no different than the rest of the world, it is a cue that we must continue striving to do better. Although ever competing with other priorities, we will continue to forge ahead with a gradual introduction of cultural complication rounds into our curricula, EDI-focused grand rounds, and promoting tools for leaders to improve their EDIA (equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility) knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours.

It is so easy to focus on the negatives and the progress still to be made, but I am heartened when I see how far we have come. Firmly entwining wellness, EDIA, and professionalism into our new strategic plan will help form a framework of where we need to be as we move forward. I am excited to be a part of it and humbled by the strength and fortitude of our department members.

Please be kind and look after each other.

Dr. Natalie Yanchar
Deputy Department Head, Equity, Diversity,
Inclusion, Wellness, and Professionalism



“A MAJOR PART OF DENTISTRY IS ABOUT TAKING PEOPLE OUT OF PAIN. BEING ABLE TO REMOVE THEIR SUFFERING AND GET THEM BACK TO FUNCTION IS INCREDIBLY REWARDING.”

DR. ADHAM FARES DENTISTRY AND ORAL HEALTH

Dr. Adham Fares has always been interested in science and medicine, but becoming a dentist was not on his radar until a practicum opened his eyes to new possibilities. While shadowing Dr. Derek Townsend in Kelowna, BC, Dr. Fares was inspired to change his trajectory, and he has not looked back. “Practicing dentistry has been immensely fulfilling,” says Fares. “A major part of dentistry is taking people out of pain, so being able to remove their suffering and get them back to function is incredibly rewarding.”

Fares, age 35, was born in Lebanon but came to Canada when his family immigrated in 2005. He completed a science degree and dental school at McGill University before moving

across the country to attend a Dental General Practice Residency (GPR) program offered through the University of Alberta and hosted in Calgary. He joined the Department of Surgery in 2019. Dr. Fares is the Director of the Foothills Hospital Dental Clinic and the Division Lead of Adult Hospital Dentistry. He has been the Section Chief of Dentistry and Oral Health in the Calgary Zone since January 2023.

The Section of Dentistry and Oral Health focuses on the management of medically complex patients, special-needs patients, and patients undergoing cancer therapy. “People often wonder about the difference between a community practice at the hospital and a private practice, and it really comes down to the complexity of the patients,” says Fares.

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

"Patients seen in a hospital setting might require general anesthesia before dental work, or the patient might be dealing with several medical conditions or undergoing cancer treatment." The section often works closely with the oncology team to support individuals through head and neck cancer. They provide preventative dental treatment and work closely with the patient's health team to choose the best time for dental treatment in conjunction with their cancer treatment. "It is humbling to join patients on their tough journey with cancer," says Fares. "I find it rewarding to know that I have helped in some way."

When Fares joined the department in 2019, the dental section and residency program were in a rebuilding phase, and Fares worked closely with then Section Chief, Dr. Graham Cobb, to make improvements. Operating room time was increased by 600% during the next five years, significantly reducing wait times, though Covid and the launch of Connect Care have caused them to take a few steps back. "The increase in patients and emergencies seen has been phenomenal," says Fares. "Plus, the alignment and closeness of the managers and clinical leads have had a truly positive impact on the clinic." The General Practice Residency program was relaunched in 2022 with one student and now accepts two students yearly. Dr. Fares hopes the residents feel supported and feel that they are getting a quality education. "With the addition of Dr. Brad Fisher as the Residency Program Director," says Fares, "I think we are making this happen."

The Section of Dentistry and Oral Health provides services to adult and pediatric patients, primarily at the Foothills Medical Centre and Alberta Children's Hospital. These dentists and dental specialists provide dental and oral care to adults and children with complex medical conditions and complex dental/oral conditions.

Fares is also a member of the Oral Health Working Group, focusing on the new dental clinic in the Calgary Cancer Centre. He hopes the clinic will be one of the most advanced in the city, serving their patient population at the highest calibre. "My vision is to see a multidisciplinary dental clinic that embraces digital dentistry," says Fares. Because much of their work is with cancer patients, the Foothills Dental Clinic will move to the cancer centre once it opens.

Outside of Fares' responsibilities at the hospital and his private practice, he is the Executive Director and Founder of XeroStrip Inc. XeroStrip is a product that improves the quality of life for patients who suffer from dry mouth.

Patients taking multiple medications, going through radiation or chemotherapy, using CPAP machines, taking antidepressants, or with certain autoimmune diseases often suffer from severe dry mouth, which can lead to serious dental complications. "Most people do not realise that saliva provides a protective layer. It helps clean our mouth and protect our teeth," says Fares. "Brushing and flossing are important, but without saliva, you are more susceptible to tooth decay, gum disease, and enamel erosion." XeroStrip is used at night and placed between the patient's cheek and gums. The slow-release xylitol is active for 8-10 hours, stimulating saliva production. Dr. Fares is excited about the product and the relief it can provide patients already dealing with medical challenges. XeroStrip is approved in the USA and recently received approval from Health Canada.

***DID YOU KNOW?
DR. FARES IS
THE FOUNDER
OF XEROSTRIP, A
PRODUCT HELPING
PATIENTS WHO
SUFFER FROM
SEVERE DRY MOUTH.***

When Dr. Fares is not working in his private or hospital practice, he enjoys cycling, travelling, and exploring some of the great restaurants that have popped up in the Calgary dining scene. "I have really enjoyed my time in Calgary, and I appreciate all the opportunities I have been presented," says Fares. "I am looking forward to the next five years, and I hope to build on the work started by Dr. Graham Cobb and myself to bring even more positive changes to the section."

By Tammie Roy



2023 SURGEONS' DAY

The Annual Surgeon's Day Research Symposium was held at the Clara Christie Theatre, Health Science Centre, on June 9, 2023. The event was a great success, with over 100 attendees and 20 presenters. This year's symposium had presentations given within the pillars of Clinical and Pre-Clinical Research, Health Systems, and Education, as well as a Resident Research Showcase and the highly successful Sharpest Knife Live Grant Competition. Thank you to our guest speakers, Dr. Heather Baltzer, University of Toronto, Section of Plastic Surgery, as the McPhedran Lecturer, and Dr. Janice Pasieka, University of Calgary, Section of General Surgery, as the McMurtry Lecturer. A thank you also goes to the presenters, moderators, and event organizers who helped ensure a successful and enjoyable event. Please join us in congratulating the Surgeons' Day winners!



Dr. Janice Pasieka

Guest Judge and McMurtry Lecture



Dr. Heather Baltzer

Guest Judge and McPhedran Lecture

SHARPEST KNIFE LIVE GRANT COMPETITION

This year's Sharpest Knife presentations were so good that all three were funded!



Dr. Prism Schneider

Section of Orthopedic Surgery

Prospective Evaluation of a Novel Continuous Intra-Compartmental Pressure Monitoring System for Assessing Pre-and Post-Extremity Revascularization Outcomes.



Dr. Andrew Kirkpatrick

Section of General Surgery

The Remote Connected Drone-Delivered Start-the-Breathe Project.



Dr. Rob Harrop

Section of Plastic Surgery and Pediatric Surgery

Single-cell Genomics of Pediatric Burn Wound Healing.

PETER CRUSE AWARD



Sarthak Sinha

UCalgary Medical Student, MD/PhD Candidate

Fibroblast inflammatory priming determines regenerative versus fibrotic skin repair.

**RESIDENT RESEARCH SHOWCASE
FIRST PLACE**



**Dr. Daniel
You**

(Orthopedic Resident)
PGY-5, Section of Orthopaedic Surgery

*An Early Coagulation-Factor Dominant
Hypercoagulability is Followed by a Prolonged
Plated-Dominant Hypercoagulability in Patients
with Hip Fracture.*

**RESIDENT RESEARCH SHOWCASE
SECOND PLACE**



**Dr. Kiana
Mahboubi**

PGY-3, Section of Otolaryngology-
Head & Neck Surgery

*The Impact of Ethnicity on Oncologic
Outcomes for Oral Cavity Squamous Cell
Carcinoma.*

**RESIDENT RESEARCH SHOWCASE
THIRD PLACE/HUMANITARIAN AWARD**



**Dr. Michael
Kryshtalskyj**

PGY-3, Section of Ophthalmology

*Eyes on Ukraine: A Canadian Ophthalmological
Society Foundation humanitarian aid initiative
born in Calgary.*

**THANK
YOU**

We greatly appreciate and thank
the following companies that
provided an educational grant in-
kind support for Surgeons' Day.



2023 DEPARTMENT GALA

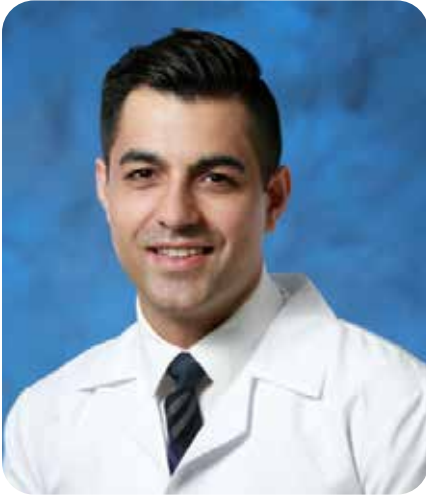
The Department of Surgery's annual gala was a fun, western-themed celebration hosted at the Girletz Ranch. Our members, fresh from a day of informative Surgeons' Day research presentations, swapped their lab coats for lassos. They tried their hand at calf roping,

mechanical bull riding, and even trick roping. The night continued with a delicious barbecue dinner and a fun Wild West show and ended with a lively barn dance. Surgeons' Day awards were also presented during dinner. It was a fun night where everyone kicked up their boots and had a great time!





RESEARCH CORNER



Dr. Kam Kaler

Podium Presentation

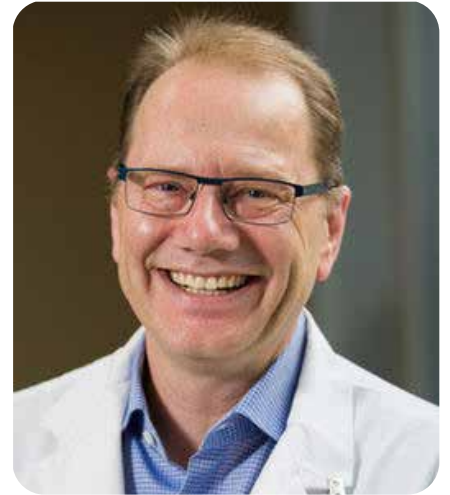
Congratulations to Dr. Kaler, Dr. Graham, Jennifer Bolt, Francisco Aguirre, and the entire Section of Urology for supporting the latest QI opioid project. The abstract, Quality Improvement on Post Ureteroscopy Opioid Prescribing Practices, was a podium presentation at the American Urological Association's 2023 Annual Meeting. This is the second department opioid prescription project to succeed in presenting at an international event. Congratulations to everyone involved!



Dr. Mary Brindle

Alberta Major Innovation Fund

The W21C has been awarded \$6.3 million in funding through Alberta's Major Innovation Fund. Led by W21C Academic Director Dr. Mary Brindle and co-developed with community, industry, and academic partners, the funding will allow for the creation of Health Everywhere, a provincial hub of digital health excellence, bringing together integrated programs, services, leading experts, resources, and projects to enable efficient and effective commercialization, spread, and scale of eHealth and mHealth technologies. Congratulations to Dr. Brindle and team at the W21C!



Dr. Oliver Bathe

Wayne Foo Professorship of Surgical Oncology

Congratulations to Dr. Oliver Bathe, who was selected as the Wayne Foo Professor of Surgical Oncology. The professorship is supported by a \$1 million gift from the Wayne Foo Family Foundation through the Alberta Cancer Foundation and will lead and conduct research in the area of surgical oncology. Congratulations Dr. Bathe!



Dr. Prism Schneider

Multiple Grants and Awards

Congratulations to Dr. Prism Schneider, who has received multiple grants and awards, including two CIHR grants totalling more than \$2 million. She also received the J. Édouard Samson Funding Award from the Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation, which recognizes the best career orthopaedic research over a period of five years or more at a Canadian Centre. In addition, Dr. Schneider received a Stars Career Development Award from the Arthritis Society of Canada, an award aimed at fostering the careers of early and mid-career investigators and building strong pipelines of research. These awards will support multiple projects. Congratulations to Dr. Schneider on her success.



Dr. Randy Moore

First Aortic Aneurysm Wall Strength Prediction Tool Using AI

Congratulations to Dr. Randy Moore for the first-ever published aortic aneurysm wall strength prediction tool using AI called ViTAA (Virtual Touch Aortic Aneurysm). An offshoot of his research collaboration with the Schulich School of Engineering, Dr. Moore's software company, ViTAA Medical Solutions, is recognized worldwide as the first tool for clinicians that allows for precision aortic care. They published their initial pivotal trial data in the July 2023 issue of the Journal of Vascular Surgery, and Dr. Moore spent the last year presenting their data at major vascular meetings globally. They are now completing a multicenter prospective registry trial at eight North American sites, with 40 more sites to be enrolled by the end of the year.



Dr. Tara Klassen

Alberta Major Innovation Fund

Congratulations to Dr. Tara Klassen and team on receiving a \$7 million Alberta Major Innovation Fund (MIF) grant for the Alberta Medical Device Innovation Consortium (A-MEDICO). A-MEDICO's mission is to develop new medical technologies with the communities they will serve and implement new, sustainable, accelerated access pathways for the adoption of transformative medical device technology solutions. This funding will result in healthcare savings, improved care for Albertans, and advancement of the Alberta medical device industry. Please visit <https://research.ucalgary.ca/A-MEDICO> for more information.



THE LIFE OF A SCIENTIST

Dr. Tara Klassen was destined to be a scientist working in healthcare. Her mother has degrees in science and education, and her father is a general practitioner, so it is not surprising that her interest was cultivated at an early age. "My dad was a doctor in a smaller community, and when I'd visit him, he would take me to the hospital when he was doing rounds. I loved going to see the nurses at the nursing station," says Klassen. "They always took great care of me. I have very fond memories of being in the hospital, hearing the sounds, and seeing the people working. A life devoted to science and healthcare seemed preordained for me."

Klassen, age 43, has been with Alberta Health Services (AHS) since 2020 as the Scientific Lead and Program Manager for the Evidence Decision Support Program (EDSP) and the Provincial Advisory Council on Surgical

Innovation. This dual role sees her evaluating health technology for potential implementation in the Department of Surgery and the wider AHS network, perfectly aligning her interest in science and healthcare.

Born in Winnipeg but raised in Brandon, Manitoba, Klassen followed in her parent's footsteps by attending Brandon University right out of high school. "I always knew I wanted to do something in medicine," says Klassen, "though I originally thought that meant being a veterinarian."

As an undergraduate student, Klassen had the opportunity to work as a research assistant and was teaching chemistry and biology labs by the time she graduated with a specialist degree in zoology. "I had my path planned out," says Klassen. "I even did my MCATs (medical college admission test) but



walked out of my med school interview. At that moment, I realized I wanted to be a scientist.” She received a National Science and Engineering Research Council Postgraduate Scholarship to come to the University of Alberta, where she started working on a master’s degree in biological sciences.

Klassen quickly fast-tracked from a master’s into a PhD program working on ion channels, proteins responsible for electrical neuromuscular signalling, in jellyfish. Though she enjoyed this work, she felt that something was missing. “There was a disconnect,” says Klassen. “I love animals. Obviously, I did a degree in zoology, but I was missing the patient care piece that really inspires me.”

Klassen and her husband, Dr. Tim Chen, completed their PhDs within months of each other. Once done, they packed up and moved to Texas to complete postdoctoral fellowships at Baylor College of Medicine. “We worked for six years in the same lab and on the same project with back-to-back desks,” says Klassen. “He’s literally my partner in life and science.” This



continued...



“I HAD MY PATH PLANNED OUT. I EVEN DID MY MCATS BUT WALKED OUT OF MY MED SCHOOL INTERVIEW. AT THAT MOMENT, I REALIZED I WANTED TO BE A SCIENTIST.”

began Klassen's transition into patient-directed care. Her work on ion channels in animals was applied to researching ion channel involvement in complex, uncontrolled epilepsy, which led to one of the most important projects of Klassen's career.

Klassen and her husband were invited to partake in a project studying Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP). "SUDEP cases are tragic. Outside of their epilepsy, you have these young adults that are very healthy," says Klassen. "But, 30% of patients with uncontrolled epilepsy will die of SUDEP, and there seemed to be no reason or rationale. It is not seemingly caused by their seizure disorder. They just go to bed one night and don't wake up."

The research team was successful in identifying the genes involved in SUDEP events. "It was an important finding," says Klassen. "Probably one of the most impactful scientific achievements of my career." This meaningful work was

highlighted in a 2010 New York Times piece called Unmasking Silent Killer in Epilepsy. "I'm happy we were able to provide a rationale and understanding of these tragic events," says Klassen. "I hope it gave families some peace of mind knowing there was nothing they could have done."

FUN FACT: Klassen's lab at UBC was used to film the pilot for The Flash and a WWE movie featuring Canadian professional wrestler Edge (Adam Joseph Copeland).

After six years in Texas, Klassen returned to Canada, landing at the University of British Columbia (UBC) as an Assistant Professor of Pathophysiology for the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, overseeing curriculum and research.

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

Vancouver is known as Hollywood North, and Klassen had a front-row seat for film production occurring at the UBC campus. “At times, our entire lab was hired out for film production,” says Klassen. “Some of my summer students were even hired as extras. It was pretty cool to see explosions or recognize an actress.”

After five years in Vancouver, Klassen and her husband moved to Calgary to be closer to aging parents. “My husband and I really like Calgary,” says Klassen, “and it put us even closer to family in Manitoba.” Klassen found a perfect opportunity with the Department of Surgery, which brought her interests and experience together as the Scientific Lead and Program Manager for the Evidence Decision Support Program (EDSP) and the Provincial Advisory Council on Surgical Innovation.

Once a niche program within the Department of Surgery, the EDSP has evolved into a program that sits within the Department of Surgery Calgary Zone and the Surgery Strategic Clinical Network. “We are the only innovations-based program in AHS,” says Klassen. “We have strong connections to our frontline stakeholders and clinical caregivers, so it creates a new model for health technology assessment and management through the support we provide teams in making evidence-based decisions.”

The Provincial Advisory Council on Surgical Innovation ensures the EDSP’s research and recommendations are shared broadly with the AHS community. “One group or stakeholder may have a question or an idea about a health product or drug,

but other groups may also be interested,” says Klassen. “The advisory council ensures that everyone has this information.”

As the newly minted Provincial Program Lead of Surgical Innovation, Klassen regularly works with a variety of surgical specialties, including those outside of the Department of Surgery, such as cardiology and obstetrics and gynecology. She also works with anesthesiology and their pain medicine partners. Klassen’s portfolio spans every site and zone across Alberta, and she has an innate ability to connect people and ideas. In 2022, she was awarded the Cumming School of Medicine’s (CSM) Service to People and Partners Individual Award, recognizing her outstanding personal contributions to the CSM by an individual employed by AHS, their subsidiaries, or partners.

“It’s so invigorating to find a role and place that fits the pace of how I think and work. I really appreciate the opportunity to impact patient care, even without being the clinical hands-on provider,” says Klassen. “I really enjoy what I do. I’ve taken a different journey than I expected, but every step has prepared me for what I’m doing today, and I couldn’t love it more.”

To learn more about the EDSP and its work, visit <https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/departments/surgery/programs/evidence-decision-support-program> or <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/edsp.aspx>.

By Tammie Roy

“WE ARE THE ONLY INNOVATIONS-BASED PROGRAM IN AHS. WE (THE EDSP) HAVE STRONG CONNECTIONS TO OUR FRONTLINE STAKEHOLDERS AND CLINICAL CAREGIVERS, SO IT CREATES A NEW MODEL FOR HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE TEAMS IN MAKING EVIDENCE-BASED DECISIONS.”

CUMMING SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AWARDS



**Dr. Marcia
Clark**

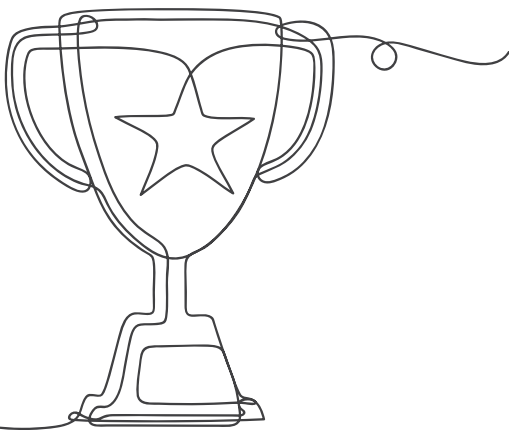
LONG-TERM EDUCATION CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Congratulations to Dr. Marcia Clark, recipient of the Cumming School of Medicine Long-Term Education Contribution Award for Clinical, Adjunct, and Research Faculty.

Dr. Clark has been involved in undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate educational activities as a mentor, evaluator, supervisor, clinical teacher, and preceptor. She was the Surgical Foundations Director and Co-Director from 2013 to 2017 and the Medical Director of the Advanced Technical Skills and Simulation Lab from 2015 to 2020. Dr. Clark was also the Education Lead for the Section of Orthopaedics (Family Medicine) at South Health Campus until 2019.

Dr. Clark, in collaboration with colleagues, created the Royal College Simulation Educator Training (SET) Course. This course was developed to improve medical training capacity in Canada through faculty development and serves as the foundation for the growth of simulation-based health educator competency across Canada.

Dr. Clark has established a reputation for excellence in medical education, receiving many awards for her work. Dr. Clark's commitment to medical education at all levels has advanced the field and inspired numerous medical students.





Dr. Ganesh Swamy

RESEARCH BASIC SCIENCE AWARD

Congratulations to Dr. Ganesh Swamy, recipient of the Cumming School of Medicine Research Basic Science Award for Clinical, Adjunct, and Research Faculty.

Dr. Swamy's research program focuses on degenerative spondylolisthesis (dSpondy) and degenerative scoliosis (dScoli), common spinal deformities displaying a markedly higher incidence in females. These conditions cause excessive pain and reduced quality of life and, in most cases, eventually require surgical intervention.

The core principle of Dr. Swamy's investigation is understanding if sex hormones are involved in these disease processes and if there is a mechanical difference in the intervertebral disc in these females.

Dr. Swamy has built a multi-disciplinary team of mechanical engineers, biologists, and proteomics experts and has constructed a tissue biobank, the first of its kind. He is exploring the structural weakness through imaging, histopathology, genetic variations in proteases, and tissue-level proteomics. To Dr. Swamy's knowledge, the investigations into the structure and function of intervertebral discs in dScoli and dSpondy are the first studies to sub-categorize degenerative spinal diseases based on tissue-level data.

Dr. Swamy has established a reputation for research excellence, with his current research program set to bring important advancements to the treatment of spinal deformities.



Dr. Natalie Yanchar

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION AWARD

Congratulations to Dr. Natalie Yanchar, recipient of the Cumming School of Medicine Continuing Medical Education Award for Clinical, Adjunct, and Research Faculty. Dr. Yanchar is a distinguished leader in continuing medical education due to developing a trauma course that has spread and gained international recognition.

Prior to 2010, Dr. Yanchar and a group of colleagues identified the need for education focused on trauma resuscitation of pediatric patients, which initiated the development of a national pediatric trauma curriculum. This work led to developing the Trauma Resuscitation in Kids (TRIK) course.

After running in Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children in 2012, the course evolved into a partnership with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) and developed into an RCPSC CME Accredited Course. In 2017, TRIK was brought to the USA with the onboarding of several American pediatric trauma leaders, and in 2022, Dr. Yanchar co-led the Global TRIK arm of the course, seeing the first international delivery in Brazil.

Dr. Yanchar's development and expansion of the Trauma Resuscitation in Kids course has brought important continuing medical education to physicians from local to international centres.

MARTIN T. SPOOR MEMORIAL AWARD



Congratulations to Dr. Jeffrey Grab, who was selected by the Postgraduate Surgical Training Committee (PGSTC) as the 2022-2023 recipient of the Martin T. Spoor Memorial Award. Dr. Grab is currently a fifth-year postgraduate resident in the Vascular Surgery Residency Program.

This award is given annually to a University of Calgary surgical resident committed to providing the highest level of patient care and who displays qualities of leadership, mentorship, technical proficiency, and compassion to their patients and colleagues.

Dr. Grab was nominated by his Vascular Surgery Program Director, Dr. Kenton Rommens, who tells us, "Dr. Grab is extremely hard-working, talented clinically, and has taken on many leadership responsibilities with grace and maturity. He has excelled scholastically with multiple teaching awards at the undergraduate level, and he recently published a meta-analysis on cold renal perfusion protection for open complex aortic aneurysm repair under the supervision of Dr. Randy Moore." Please join us as we extend heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Grab.

KRISTIN SIVERTZ RESIDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



Dr. Fatemeh Ramazani (centre)

Congratulations to Dr. Fatemeh Ramazani, who received the Kristin Sivertz Resident Leadership Award from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. This award is given to a resident who demonstrates leadership in Canadian specialty education and encourages the development of future leaders in medicine. Dr. Ramazani is a fifth-year postgraduate resident in the Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Residency Program.

Driven by her interest in simulation, advocacy, and curriculum development, Dr. Ramazani has led the creation of interactive and simulation-based classroom sessions, enhancing and delivering otolaryngology education to medical students and residents, both within Calgary and across Canada. With a primary interest in integrating advocacy training into postgraduate surgical education, she has also initiated the development of an advocacy curriculum tailored to meet the distinctive challenges of surgical training. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Ramazani and her commitment to advancing surgical education.

ENHANCING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI) SKILLS: **QI TRAINING FOR SURGICAL RESIDENTS**

Continuous quality improvement is an important aspect of the healthcare system. It contributes to improved patient outcomes while driving efficiency and innovation. Quality improvement activities are also a requirement for all physicians in Alberta to maintain their licensure. Recognizing the need to expose surgeons to quality improvement methodologies early in their careers, the Office of Surgical Quality (OSQ) has embarked on an initiative to bring quality improvement (QI) training directly to surgery residents.

Led by our QI consultant, Francisco Aguirre, and supported by the Director of the OSQ, Dr. Andrew Graham, the OSQ has developed a training program to enhance the QI abilities of the next generation of surgeons and equip them with the skills needed to initiate and run quality improvement projects.

Tailored for surgical residents in the Calgary Zone, this training covers the key actions needed to execute a quality improvement project using the AHS Improvement Way (AIW) methodology. The training program combines theoretical knowledge shared in a classroom setting with practical team-based activities that allow residents to practice what they have learned. A surgeon must be present during the training sessions to challenge residents with examples related to their surgical specialty, thus merging the QI concepts and processes with their surgical learning. Additionally, participants have the option to engage in a parallel project during the training sessions, allowing them to apply QI concepts and tools to real-world scenarios. This training approach fosters active learning, engagement, and hands-on experience.

To date, the OSQ has run this customizable training program with two surgical sections, Orthopedics and Ophthalmology, with both resident groups providing overwhelmingly positive feedback. Dr. Peter Lewkonja, an orthopedic surgeon who has been actively involved in the training sessions for orthopedic residents, shared his positive experience, "I have had multiple residents provide spontaneous, positive feedback about the process, which is uncommon to see as an educator. I would definitely recommend this training to other surgical sections."

If you are interested in learning more about QI training for surgery residents and how the sessions can be customized

to work with the residents' busy schedules, please reach out to Francisco Aguirre (Francisco.Aguirre@ahs.ca) or Dr. Andrew Graham (Andrew.Graham@ahs.ca). You can also visit the OSQ SharePoint site for more information at <https://share.albertahealthservices.ca/teams/DOSQuality> and contact Francisco Aguirre if you require site access.

The OSQ was established in 2016 to coordinate and enhance the quality improvement efforts within the Department of Surgery, establishing the Calgary Zone Surgical Quality Council (CZSQC) to address these goals.

Francisco Aguirre is the OSQ's Quality Improvement Consultant. He is a professional engineer licensed and registered with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA). Francisco has an industrial engineering degree, an MBA, and more than 20 years of experience in QI processes and projects in various industries. He has spent the last seven years in the Alberta Health Services (AHS) environment.



Francisco Aguirre

WELCOME TO NEW FACULTY



Dr. Adam Siray

Dentistry and Oral Health

Dr. Adam Siray was born and raised in the foothills of Millarville, Alberta. He completed his undergraduate degree in Medical Sciences and Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of Alberta. After years of private practice in general dentistry, Dr. Siray completed his residency in pediatric dentistry and obtained a Master's in Dentistry from the University of Manitoba. Dr. Siray is a fellow of the Royal College of Dentists of Canada.



Dr. Alexander Meldrum

Clinical Lecturer
Orthopedic Surgery

Dr. Meldrum received his medical degree at the University of Saskatchewan, followed by a residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Calgary. He then pursued fellowship training in complex hip and knee arthroplasty (replacement) at Dalhousie University in Halifax and an orthopedic trauma fellowship at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Melbourne, Australia. Dr. Meldrum also completed a Master of Education (Health Professions Education) through the University of Ottawa. Dr. Meldrum is an attending orthopedic surgeon at the Rockyview General Hospital with a practice focusing on hip and knee arthroplasty, knee arthroscopy, and trauma.



Dr. Alison Laws

Assistant Professor of
Surgery and Oncology

Dr. Alison Laws completed her general surgery residency at the University of Calgary and breast surgery fellowship at the Massachusetts General and Brigham and Women's Hospitals in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Laws has a Master of Public Health degree from Harvard University. She previously worked as a breast surgeon for three years at the Brigham and Women's Hospital/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Dr. Laws is an active clinical researcher with interests in breast cancer risk and prevention, optimizing surgical treatments for breast cancer, and cancer care delivery.



Dr. Ashley Hincer

Clinical Lecturer
Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

Originally from Saskatchewan, Dr. Ashley Hincer completed medical school and an otolaryngology-head and neck surgery residency at the University of Calgary. She then pursued subspecialty fellowship training in advanced head and neck oncology and microvascular reconstructive surgery at the University of Alberta, followed by the oropharynx, including transoral laser microsurgery. Dr. Hincer currently practices at the Foothills Medical Centre.



Dr. Brad Fisher

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Dr. Brad Fisher was born and raised in Southern Alberta. He completed dental school at the University of Alberta, followed by medical school at Dalhousie University. He then pursued residency training in oral and maxillofacial surgery and a Master of Science at Dalhousie University. This was followed by subspecialty fellowship training in Brisbane, Australia. Dr. Fisher operates out of the Peter Lougheed Centre and is the General Practice Residency Program Director.



Dr. Caleb Zavitz

Clinical Assistant Professor
Vascular Surgery

Dr. Caleb Zavitz completed an undergraduate degree, PhD in immunology, and a postdoctoral fellowship in pathology and molecular medicine at McMaster University. He then completed a medical degree and residency in vascular surgery at the University of Toronto and a postdoctoral fellowship in advanced diagnostics – cardiology at the University Health Network in Toronto. Dr. Zavitz practiced as an attending vascular surgeon and surgeon-scientist at McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences before joining the Section of Vascular Surgery at Alberta Health Services and the University of Calgary.

WELCOME TO NEW FACULTY



Dr. Gabrielle French

Clinical Lecturer
Pediatric Otolaryngology-Head
and Neck Surgery

Dr. Gabrielle French is a native Calgarian who is happy to be returning home. She completed her medical degree at the University of Calgary, followed by a residency in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery, also at the University of Calgary. During her residency, Dr. French pursued a Master's in Surgical Science and Practice at the University of Oxford, and following her residency, she completed a fellowship in pediatric otolaryngology at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. French currently practices at the Alberta Children's Hospital and focuses on all aspects of pediatric otolaryngology.



Dr. Jonathan Yip

Clinical Lecturer
Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

Dr. Jonathan Yip completed medical school and residency training at the University of Toronto, followed by a clinical fellowship in rhinology and endoscopic skull base surgery at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois. After his fellowship, Dr. Yip returned to the Greater Toronto Area for three years, where he was a Clinical Lecturer at the University of Toronto before joining us in Calgary. Dr. Yip primarily practices at the Rockyview General Hospital. He serves as the Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Representative for the Section of Otolaryngology and is pursuing a Master of Science in Healthcare Quality at Queen's University.



Dr. Joseph Kendal

Clinical Assistant Professor
Orthopedic Oncology Surgery

Dr. Joseph Kendal completed medical school and residency training in orthopedic surgery at the University of Calgary. He then completed a two-year combined research and clinical fellowship program focused on orthopedic oncology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Kendal is excited to be back in Calgary and starting his role as an orthopedic oncology and hip and knee reconstruction surgeon at the Foothills Medical Centre.



Dr. Joshua White

Clinical Lecturer
Urology

Dr. Joshua White completed medical school at the University of Calgary, followed by residency training at Dalhousie University. He then pursued a fellowship in male sexual and reproductive medicine at the University of Miami in Miami, Florida. Dr. White returned to Calgary and joined the Department of Surgery in 2023. Dr. White is based at the Rockyview General Hospital, where he practices adult urology.



Dr. Khara Sauro

Ohlson Professor of Head & Neck Research
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Community Health Sciences, and Oncology

Dr. Khara Sauro is a health services researcher who completed her PhD in Community Health Sciences, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship in Critical Care (implementation science) before joining faculty in 2019 (Community Health Sciences, Surgery, and Oncology). In 2023, Dr. Sauro was awarded the Ohlson Professorship in the Department of Surgery. Dr. Sauro's research focuses on identifying opportunities to improve care and designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions to improve care. Dr. Sauro's research uses a variety of methods, from big data analysis to qualitative methodology.



Dr. Lee Fruson

Clinical Lecturer
Orthopedic Surgery

Dr. Lee Fruson was born and raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta. He completed medical school and orthopedic residency training at the University of Calgary. Dr. Fruson then pursued dual fellowships, including adult hip and knee reconstruction with Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois. This was followed by a fellowship in orthopedic trauma surgery at Foothills Medical Centre with the University of Calgary. Dr. Fruson practices at the Peter Lougheed Centre, focusing on minimally invasive arthroplasty techniques, partial knee replacement, and fracture care.

WELCOME TO NEW FACULTY



Dr. Mark Lipson

Clinical Lecturer
Colorectal-General Surgery

Dr. Lipson is excited to return to Calgary and join an excellent group of mentors and colleagues within the Section of General Surgery. He completed medical school at the University of Manitoba, followed by general surgery training and a colorectal surgery fellowship at the University of Calgary. Dr. Lipson also completed a Master of Public Policy degree through the School of Public Policy in Calgary. Dr. Lipson is based at the Peter Lougheed Centre, where he provides colorectal and general surgery care.



Dr. Neal Austin

Clinical Lecturer
Transplant Surgery and General Surgery

Dr. Neal Austin was born in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, but was raised in Vermilion, Alberta. He completed his medical degree at the University of Calgary. He then pursued a general surgery residency and transplant surgery training, also at the University of Calgary. Dr. Austin has a joint position between the Sections of Transplant Surgery and General Surgery. He practices out of the Foothills Medical Centre and Peter Lougheed Centre.



Dr. Rubini Pathy

Clinical Lecturer
Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery

Dr. Rubini Pathy grew up in Toronto, Ontario, and worked as a physical therapist for five years before completing medical school at the University of Toronto. She then pursued an orthopedic surgery residency at McMaster University. This training was followed by pediatric orthopedic surgery fellowships at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York and BC Children's Hospital. Dr. Pathy subsequently worked at Shriners Children's New England, specializing in neuromuscular disorders, where she was the Medical Director of the Motion Analysis Center. Dr. Pathy currently practices at Alberta Children's Hospital.



Dr. Ruby Bhutani

Clinical Lecturer
Dentistry and Oral Health

Dr. Ruby Bhutani graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Doctorate of Dental Surgery. After graduating, she pursued a hospital-based residency located in Calgary and associated with the University of Alberta. Dr. Bhutani is passionate about returning to the Foothills Medical Centre as a hospital dentist and clinical instructor for dental residents.



Dr. Siddharth Shinde

Clinical Lecturer
General Surgery

Dr. Siddharth Shinde completed medical school in 2017 at the University of Alberta, followed by a general surgery residency at the University of Calgary. He is excited to join the Section of General Surgery at the Rockyview General Hospital, where his practice will focus on acute care surgery and benign anorectal disease. Dr. Shinde also has a keen interest in medical education.



Dr. Tamara Gimón

Clinical Lecturer
Colorectal-General Surgery

Dr. Tamara Gimón completed medical school at the University of Toronto in 2016, followed by a general surgery residency at the University of Calgary. After residency, she returned to the University of Toronto for two years to complete a clinical colorectal surgery fellowship and a Master's in Clinical Epidemiology and Health Care Research. During her fellowship and Master's degree, her main research interest was reviewing surgical and clinical outcomes after the implementation of total neoadjuvant therapy for rectal cancer. Dr. Gimón has recently joined the Foothills Medical Centre as a colorectal surgeon.

Dr. Jessica Clark

Otolaryngology-Head
and Neck Surgery

Dr. Herman Johal

Orthopedic Surgery

CONGRATULATIONS TO MEMBERS IN NEW POSITIONS

Please join us in welcoming these members to their new positions in the department:

Dr. Ben Hughes,
Pediatric Dental Clinic Director,
effective July 1, 2023

Dr. Jason Werle,
Section Chief, Orthopedic Surgery,
renewal effective July 1, 2023

Dr. John Heine,
PLC Facility Site Chief,
renewal effective July 1, 2023

Dr. Paul Petrasek,
Director, Surgical Access Improvement,
effective July 1, 2023

Dr. Wynne Leung,
RGH Facility Site Chief,
effective July 1, 2023

Dr. John Toole,
Section Chief, Podiatric Surgery,
effective July 1, 2023

Dr. Eldridge Batuyong,
SHC Site Lead, Orthopedic Surgery,
renewal effective June 1, 2023

Dr. Alex Ragan,
Quality Improvement & Safety Lead, Ophthalmology,
extension effective April 1, 2023

Dr. Paul McBeth,
SHC Site Lead, General Surgery,
effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Carmen Brauer,
Department Member Liaison,
effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Lea Austen,
RGH Site Lead, General Surgery,
extension effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Colin Schieman,
Section Chief, Thoracic Surgery,
effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Neel Datta,
PLC Site Lead, General Surgery,
effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Sean McFadden,
Thoracic Surgery Residency Program Director,
effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Adham Fares,
Section Chief, Dentistry & Oral Health,
effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Earl Campbell,
Section Chief, Plastic Surgery,
effective January 1, 2023

Dr. Mike Dunham,
SHC Facility Site Chief,
effective November 1, 2022

Dr. Jonathan Yip,
Quality Improvement & Safety Lead,
Otolaryngology,
effective October 1, 2022

Dr. Andrew Graham,
Quality Improvement & Safety Lead,
Thoracic Surgery,
renewal effective October 1, 2022

CONGRATULATIONS TO MEMBERS WITH EMERITUS STATUS

Please join us in congratulating the following department member recently conferred with Emeritus status, honouring their considerable service to the University of Calgary through teaching, research, and engagement. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!

Dr. John Kortbeek

THANK YOU TO RETIRED MEMBERS

We would like to recognize and thank our retired members for their dedication and years of hard work. We thank you for your academic and clinical contributions to the department and wish you a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Dr. Anastasio Salazar, Transplant Surgery

Dr. Brian Burkhart, Orthopedic Surgery

Dr. Bruce Rothwell, General Surgery

Dr. Donald McPhalen, Pediatric Plastic Surgery

Dr. Doug Johnson, General Surgery

Dr. Frank Schnell, Orthopedics Hospitalist

Dr. James Harder, Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery

Dr. Jeff Way, General Surgery

Dr. John Kortbeek, General Surgery

Dr. Kelley De Souza, Orthopedic Surgery

Dr. Mark Haugrud, Plastic Surgery

Dr. Niel Hagerman, General Surgery

Dr. Robert Lindsay, Plastic Surgery

Dr. Rory Vinsky, Dentistry and Oral Health

DATES TO REMEMBER

City-Wide Rounds

February 2, 2024

March 1, 2024

April 5, 2024

May 3, 2024

June 7, 2024

Department Business Meeting

March 7, 2024

June 6, 2024

October 3, 2024

December 5, 2024

Surgeon's Day

June 21, 2024

Department Gala

June 21, 2024

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