



Leaders in
microsurgery and
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Reconstructive Microsurgery

40th
1983-2023 anniversary

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR RECONSTRUCTIVE MICROSURGERY • VOLUME 34.1

Spring-Summer 2023

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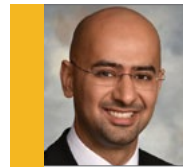
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Highlights from the 2023 Annual Meeting: What's New in RM?

By 2023 Scientific Program Co-Chairs



Rudy Buntic, MD



Arash Momeni, MD

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (ASRM) was a historically significant one in many respects and had numerous highlights. It marked the 40-year anniversary of ASRM, featured the first ever cadaver course, the first ever Nurse/APP symposium, and had the highest number of attendees with over 800.

The first ever cadaver course on Functional Extremity Reconstruction with ASPN as guest society kicked off the educational

ASRM 40th Anniversary panel

program. Attendees had the opportunity for an intimate exchange of knowledge with world-leading experts who discussed pertinent anatomy, demonstrated surgical approaches, and shared technical pearls. The incredibly positive response by course attendees will certainly result in this format being part of future ASRM meetings. The cadaver course was followed by the combined World Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (WSRM)/ American Society for Reconstructive Transplantation (ASRT) symposium on VCA in the Transgender Patient.

The motto of the meeting was "Honoring the Past and Creating a Bright Future." Perhaps no other panel embodied this motto more than the "40th Anniversary Panel" during which pioneers discussed the beginning of our Society and shared perspectives on the future of the specialty. Special thanks to ASRM Historian Evan Matros, MD who helped moderate the session but also presented the ASRM membership with an inspiring video on the history of the ASRM.

Another highlight was the "Transplantation vs. Conventional Reconstruction" panel, which demonstrated the incredible heights that have been achieved by reconstructive microsurgeons. As expected, historically popular events, such as "Best Case/Best Save" as well as the Godina and Buncke Lectureships, were standing-room only events. Congratulations to Andrei Odobescu,

Continued on page 3



FROM THE EDITOR

In This Issue



James Higgins, MD
ASRM Secretary,
RM Editor

Committee to ensure the financial wellbeing of our society, and the Education Committee’s work to improve our annual meeting content and the visibility of our members’ academic efforts in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*. Be sure to check out the Historian’s Corner, featuring the important role The O’Brien Institute in the growth of the field of reconstructive microsurgery. This issue is packed with great content we hope you all enjoy! Thanks to all of our contributors. **RM**

We hope you enjoy this Spring-Summer 2023 issue of *Reconstructive Microsurgery*. Our contributors have included highlights from our last meeting, valuable information about the upcoming 2024 Annual Meeting, the initiatives of the ASRM council under President Lipa’s leadership, and the progress and growth of our Young Microsurgeons Group and Women’s Microsurgery Group. This installment provides valuable information of the various committees and task forces where we can each contribute to the future of the ASRM.

Also featured is the important effort of the Future Growth



Many went “all in” with their attire for the “Summer of Love” celebration on the final night of the annual meeting.

RECONSTRUCTIVE MICROSURGERY

Spring-Summer 2023

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The mission of the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery is to foster excellence and innovation in microsurgery and reconstructive surgery. ASRM upholds the values of Integrity, Collegiality, Scholarship and Innovation.



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2023 ASRM ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 1

MD and Kongkrit Chaiyasate, MD for winning Best Case and Best Save, respectively.

The Master Series “Pushing the Limits in Microsurgery”, chaired by Bauback Safa, MD, was a display of awe-inspiring cases and concepts, and left the audience wondering if there are any limits to what reconstructive microsurgeons can do. The President’s Lecture by Greg Buncke, MD with special guest David Lowenberg, MD, demonstrated how through collaboration, complex clinical challenges such as osteomyelitis could be successfully treated routinely.

The social highlight unquestionably was the “Summer of Love”. The 60’s San Francisco theme pool party featuring Switchblade Nixon brought all attendees together and made for an unforgettable evening.

With over 800 attendees, 118 scientific presentation, 8 combined instructional courses, 25 ASRM instructional courses, and over 120 faculty from over 18 countries, the 2023 Annual Meeting was a historically significant one indeed. Sincere thanks to all the attendees, faculty, society staff, and industry partners for their unwavering support. We are very much looking forward to the 2024 ASRM meeting in Nassau, Bahamas. **RM**



The first ever cadaver course



Michael Zenn, MD, presides over the ever popular Best Case/Best Save event.



The band really hit a groove at the “Summer of Love Celebration” on the last evening of the meeting.



Kyle Eberlin MD (at right) represented the ASRM viewpoint on the AAHS/ASPN/ASRM Combined Panel “Reconstruction of Nerve Gaps/Allografts & Autografts.”

Photo courtesy of www.meeting-handsurgery.org

Except where noted, photos with this article courtesy of Dr. Arash Momeni

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

An Opportunity to Define a New Direction



**Joan E. Lipa,
MD, MSc, FRCSC,
FACS**
ASRM President

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your 2023 ASRM President. First, I want to thank our Immediate Past President, Dr. Gregory Buncke for his leadership and mentorship, and to congratulate him and the past Program Co-Chairs, Rudy Buntic and Arash Momeni on a phenomenal celebration of our first 40 years. As we embark on our future journey, it is Melissa Poh as Program Chair who will lead us in our upcoming meeting, January 12-16, 2024, at the magnificent Grand Hyatt Baha Mar in Nassau, Bahamas. Melissa and the Program Committee are putting together an exciting and innovative educational experience, and Jamie Levine will lead the Masters Series in Microsurgery Symposium.

The theme for this year is “Collaboration at Our Core.” It is agreed upon, even since the inception of this Society, that microsurgery is a tool. Yet, it is that tool that unites us as like-minded individuals. But microsurgeons and surgeons who carry out complex reconstructions are more than a group of individuals. We are team-players, innovators, and collaborators who work together to solve problems. Microsurgery is our tool, but Collaboration is our anchor, inherent to our actions and interactions, our philosophy and our culture.

This culture already permeates our meeting through joint programming and ventures that have evolved over time with the American Association for Hand Surgery (AAHS), American Society for Peripheral Nerve (ASPN),

World Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (WSRM, who will also be hosting their own meeting in Singapore this August), American Society for Reconstructive Transplantation (ASRT), American Society for Lymphatic Surgery (ASLS), and American Society of Gender Surgeons (ASGS). More recently, we included our Nursing and Allied Professional Providers



Outgoing ASRM President Gregory Buncke, MD, gives his opening address at the Joint President's Welcome.

in a Symposium as an integral part of our health care delivery. In addition this year, there are plans underway to showcase teams, to host a Microsurgery Skills course to involve our more junior attendees and faculty, and a concurrent Ultrasound course geared towards more experienced attendees. Stay tuned for more details to come in the Autumn-Winter edition of the RM newsletter.

Here is some information about our 2024 meeting site to get you ready (you will need a passport – check to make sure it is valid well beyond the meeting dates in accordance with your

border control requirements) and excited. This is the first time that ASRM is hosting a meeting at this property in the Bahamas. It is an oceanfront property only opened recently in 2017, with stunning golf and tennis facilities, watersports such as snorkeling and kayaking, 8 pools, a wildlife sanctuary and a waterpark. There is something for everyone in your family; the property also includes a spa, casino, and nightlife venues for you to enjoy (when there is no meeting programming, of course!)

In terms of our priorities for this year in addition to our educational programming, there are several. We are at a crossroads with the end of our current management contract with Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) as a result of the dissolution of their Medical Association Management (MAM) division. This is an opportunity to define our future direction.

We are also working to expand our already-existing collaboration culture. This is highlighted by Carolyn De La Cruz's Connections Series. I hope that you have enjoyed watching the first episodes either through the new Micro Minute monthly email update or upon visiting the website or having it delivered to you on social media. Committee Chairs and their members are hard at work looking not only at the expected parts of their roles, but also at

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 4

the development of other opportunities and enhancements. We are also updating our membership dues systems, reinvigorating our Future Growth Committee, and strengthening our existing connections with our Corporate Partners. We are returning to a more normal flow than during the pandemic, and perhaps even picking up some speed.

Taken together, what do these changes allow? They allow us to grow, and position us to offer more to you, our members – be it through website enhancements

or publication of abstracts for dissemination of information and recognition of the hard work of researchers – and, in turn, to our patients.

Please reach out if you have any feedback, or any suggestions for brief bio features for the Micro Minute.

On behalf of the Council, I thank you for your enthusiasm and your support of the ASRM to make this such a dynamic, collegial, inclusive, and invigorating Society, and we look forward to welcoming you to the 2024 meeting in the Bahamas. **RM**

FUTURE MEETINGS



JANUARY 12-16, 2024
ASRM 39TH ANNUAL MEETING
 Grand Hyatt Baha Mar
 Nassau, Bahamas



JANUARY 17-21, 2025
ASRM 40TH ANNUAL MEETING
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ASRM members enjoying some fresh brewed between programs at a Coffee with Exhibitors





ASRM 2024
Annual Meeting

Grand Hyatt Baha Mar | Nassau, BAHAMAS

• COLLABORATION AT OUR CORE •



JANUARY 12-16, 2024

SUBMIT HERE
DEADLINE July 10, 2023

Submission Categories

Basic Science/Translational Science, Breast, Trunk, Extremities, Head and Neck, Lymphedema, Vascularized Composite Allotransplantation (VCA), Gender Affirmation, Pediatrics, Nerve, Surgical Education, Business of Medicine/Practice Management, Social Media, Clinical Outcomes and NEW THIS YEAR Quality Improvement (QI) (i.e. environmental waste strategies, efficiency of diep flaps, etc.).



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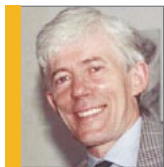
HISTORIAN'S CORNER

The O'Brien Institute, Melbourne and Its Relationship with the ASRM

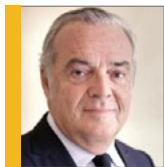
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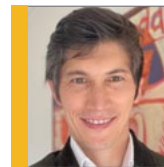
Evan Matros, MD
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In response to Tamai's and Kleinert's replantation reports, Buncke's clinical tissue transfer of toes and omentum, and Hanno Millesi's microneural repairs, young orthopaedic and plastic surgeons were captivated by microsurgery's potential. Other centers, especially those of Berish Strauch in New York, Tom Krizek, Connecticut, and Bruce Williams in Montreal began experimenting with microsurgical technique, instrumentation and preclinical tissue transfer.

Prominent among those outside the US was Bernard O'Brien at St. Vincent's hospital, in Melbourne, Australia. In the late 1960's O'Brien had organized a laboratory with microscopes and facilities for small and large animals, including primates, at the hospital for the purpose of research as well as training. He

funded scientists and technicians and travelled, published and presented widely. He established a Foundation made up of leading Melbourne business men to fund the laboratory and gained National Health and Medical

Research Council grants, the highest peer reviewed granting body in the country. In 1972, he established an international microsurgery fellowship program which included clinical surgery,

laboratory research and weekly cadaver dissections at the city morgue. Trauma case load was high because of continued industrialization, economic prosperity and migration, but health and safety regulations were in their infancy. In that year the first free skin flap was done at another Melbourne hospital by Rollin Daniel, who was O'Brien's fellow at the time, and Ian Taylor. The case sadly led to a long-term rift in loyalties



Fig. 1: In 1975, St. Vincent's/OBI alumni together at East Grinstead, UK, for the second (or third) meeting of the ISRM, with John Cobbett, President/Chairman. Left to right: W. Morrison, J. Steichen, G. Giles, J. Hayhurst, P. Sykes, A. MacLeod, B. O'Brien, A. Gilbert, L. Sharzer, M. Spira.



Fig. 2: St Vincent's/OBI alumni together during an early ISRM meeting. Front L to R: J. Hayhurst (Oklahoma), A. Gilbert Paris, B. O'Brien, Sue Mackay (theatre nurse and micro assistant OBI animal lab), J. Steichen Indiana. Rear L to R: J. May, Boston, W. Morrison, M. Reed North Carolina; B. Shafiroff NY; L Sharzer NY



Fig. 3: Time & location unknown. L to R: Bill Swartz, OBI alumni; Rollin Daniel, OBI alumni; Zhong Wei Chen, Shanghai; Wayne Morrison, OBI; Jay Hayhurst, OBI alumni; and Bob Acland

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HISTORIAN'S CORNER

THE O'BRIEN INSTITUTE AND ASRM *Continued from page 9*

but despite this, the St. Vincent's Microsurgery Research Centre, as it was then called and later the O'Brien Institute (OBI), flourished.



Fig. 4: OBI Alumni, L to R: Kazuteru Doi, Chris Pederson, Giorgio De Santis, and Rakesh Khazanchi. These four were fellows together in Melbourne during the same period, 1986-87. Each became President of their respective microsurgery societies (Japanese, American, Italian, Indian), so for this reason Dr. Morrison subsequently nicknamed them "The Four Musketeers".



Fig. 5: Team St. Vincent's, Melbourne, circa 1980. L to R: Wayne Morrison, Bernard O'Brien, Allan MacLeod, Julian Pribaz

Fellowship applications came from around the world but especially

America, and many of these early fellows became major contributors to the international scene of microsurgery and to the ASRM (Figures 1-4). Early fellows, long-term visitors and some on sabbatical included Rollin Daniel, Montreal-Alabama; Jay Hayhurst, Oklahoma; James May, Boston; James Steichen, Indiana; John Franklin, Tennessee; William Shaw, New York; Robert Russell, Illinois; Chris Pederson, Texas; Bruce Shafiroff, New York; Melvin Spira, Texas; Tsu-Min Tsai, Taiwan-Kentucky; and William Swartz, Pennsylvania. Julian Pribaz, a St Vincent's graduate and plastic surgery resident during Bob Russell's fellowship, was influenced to complete his training in Springfield at Southern Illinois University where he completed the American Boards exam. He returned to Melbourne at St. Vincent's for a few years before

being invited to the Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston (Figure 5). Notable non-Americans during that period included Alain Gilbert, France; Kas Doi, Japan; Hans Steinau, Germany; Hung-Chi Chen, Taiwan; Antonio Landi and Giorgio De Santis, Italy; St Vincent's could boast a broad international alumni who would subsequently influence the direction of microsurgery.

In 1970 in response to this newly developing field of surgery, the ISRM (International Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery) was formed with the inaugural meeting held in Vienna under the presidency of Hanno Milleli (Figures 6-8). Two years later the International Society of Microsurgery (ISM), under president Earl Owen, was formed. The former society was more exclusive and invited only those with established practices in orthopaedic, plastic and head and neck surgery. The ISM included an eclectic membership of surgeons of all disciplines, scientists, technicians, lymphologists and others. Rival leadership and crossed purposes led to their amalgamation in 1999 into the WSRM (World Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery) with Fu-Chan Wei as its first President (Figure 9). At the 1983 ISRM meeting in New York chaired by Berish Strauch, discussions took place regarding the creation of an American Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery (Figure 10). Its establishment



Fig. 6: 6th Meeting of the ISRM, Melbourne, 1981. Bernard O'Brien, President.

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HISTORIAN'S CORNER



Fig. 7: 10th ISRM in Munich. L to R: Roger Khouri, Giorgio De Santis, Chris Pederson and his wife, and Mr. O'Brien

THE O'BRIEN INSTITUTE AND ASRM

Continued from page 9

obviously included many of the pioneers and major contributors to the international society and their potential withdrawal of allegiance threatened dilution and the potential relevance of the international groups whose mission was to bring microsurgery to a wider audience, especially former Soviet states (Figure 11), Asia and the Pacific and third world nations. Fortunately, this did not happen, and despite most other countries having since established their own national microsurgical societies, the WSRM and ASRM, whose own membership has become somewhat internationalized, fill a major void for those interested predominantly in major reconstructive surgery where in some cases their national plastic surgery organizations have become dominated by aesthetics.

In later years The O'Brien Institute lost influence as an international training centre because of the reduced volume of microsurgical trauma and because training experience could be readily sought locally. The Institute also became more basic-science research

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Fig. 8: Executive Council at the 10th ISRM Meeting, in Munich Germany, 1991. Ian Taylor President, Edgar Biemer, Chairman. L to R: Millesi, Ferreira, Taylor, Cobbett, O'Brien, Biemer, Strauch, Chen, Tamai, Buncke



Fig. 9: Inaugural Congress of the World Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery, 2001, Taipei Taiwan. President Fu-Chan Wei



Fig. 10: Photo likely taken at the ISRM meeting in 1983, New York, organized by Berish Strauch. It includes not only American surgeons, but all the international pioneers. Bernard O'Brien was outgoing president of the ISRM at that time hence he was in the center with Strauch beside him. On his other side is Leonard Sharzer, a fellow at St Vincent's at that time who was sponsored by Berish. It may be that the discussion to form an American society (ASRM) took place during this meeting. Six St. Vincent's/OBI alumni are included.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Raising Our Visibility in the PRS Journal



James Butterworth, MD
Education Committee Chair

The Education Committee has been busy over the past few years. In addition to the standard duties of reviewing abstracts for the meeting and helping select the council-member-in-training, we have taken on a few new duties. Most of these revolve around our relationship with our home journal *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (PRS)*. The ASRM has worked hard to gain better visibility and bolster our society's contribution to the *PRS* journal. Coming down the pike is a fast track to publica-

tion for manuscripts submitted that won the Most Outstanding Abstract and Elizabeth Beahm awards at the annual meeting. Additionally, we have negotiated to generate annual reconstructive topics for CME articles authored from the ranks of our society.

Lastly, coming soon will be the ASRM collection link on the *PRS* website where a repository of selective reconstructive papers published in *PRS* will be stored for easy access for individuals navigating the site. The ASRM Council and Education Committee have continued to push forward our initiatives and greatly appreciate the collaboration with *PRS* Editor-In-Chief Dr. Kevin Chung, Editor-In-Chief Dr. Jeffrey Janis at *PRS Global Open* and their incredible support teams to help actualize these goals. **RM**

"The ASRM has worked hard to gain better visibility and bolster our society's contribution to the *PRS* journal."

THE O'BRIEN INSTITUTE AND ASRM *Cont'd from page 10*

focused so as to be competitive for major funding sources and as such became less attractive to those whose interests were predominantly clinical. For a period during the first

decade of the 21st century, the concurrent Presidents of almost all the major national and international societies of Microsurgery, Hand and Plastic Surgery were former St. Vincent's/OBI alumni. Their influence has been substantial

in their own right, but it is the interconnectivity with others through their fellowship acquaintances, alumni meetings, mutual membership of societies such as the ASRM and WSRM, volunteer micro-

surgical missions, and personal friendships that has exponentially broadened their contribution to microsurgery. **RM**

Editor's note: Some pictures are courtesy of the "History of Microsurgery," by Dr. Julia Terzis

Fig. 11: Under the leadership of Dr. Robert Russell (top left), a team of US surgeons visited Moscow during the Reagan, Gorbachev summit. Replants, monitoring, nerve regeneration and training were discussed.



YOUNG MICROSURGEONS GROUP

Yesterday's Vision Come to Fruition



Amanda Silva, MD
Chair, Young
Microsurgeons
Group

It's an honor to serve as the Young Microsurgeons' Group (YMG) Chair this year. I remember sitting at YMG panels as a resident and listening to the young microsurgeons present their toughest cases. The humble pride associated with their successes and even more importantly their honesty, openness, and vulnerability in discussing their failures was inspiring and something helpful to lean on early in practice as I've had my own similar experiences.

When I took on this role, I was curious about the history of YMG. I looked back through old ASRM newsletters and read the YMG columns. I found that YMG was started 14 years ago by Dr. William Zamboni when he was the 2009 President of ASRM. He wrote about this new initiative in the Spring/Summer 2009 newsletter. He starts by reflecting on his own inspiration having attended the meeting as a trainee. He then goes on to introduce the new YMG and its intent to "make sure our young members have a strong voice in the society." The first chair was Dr. Michael Klebuc and the first YMG committee members were Drs. Rob Whitfield, Liza Wu, Jay Agarwal, Raman Mahabir, Scott White, and Rich Baynosa.

One of the things I found to be interesting about the origins of YMG was something Dr. Baynosa said to me recently. It was my first time meeting him and he made a comment about when his mentor unexpectedly passed away, he found community and support in his career development through the societ-

ies. I didn't know at the time that the late William Zamboni, his mentor, had founded YMG, but I found it to be beautiful that his mentor posthumously was able to continue to support him through the initiative he had set up.

Our goal with YMG is to support young microsurgeons through creating community and aiding career development. Membership in YMG is automatic. It's comprised of ASRM members in their first 8 years of practice after formal training. The YMG committee is composed of 10 members including the resident or fellow council member in training. We have representatives on various committees, organize programming for 2 panels with content targeted towards young microsurgeons during the annual meeting, and host a networking social hour and fellowship roundtable.

Our committee met recently and I'm excited about what we have planned for this year. One thing we'd like to do is learn more about the YMG members. We created a new sign-up sheet that we're planning to launch soon. It will help us better understand who our members are and where their interests lie. We hope to highlight our current members and connect with past members to see where they are now. Many young microsurgeons beyond the committee have expressed interest in wanting to be more involved with YMG, and we're planning many ways to facilitate this. We're excited to foster engagement both at the meeting and beyond. Look out for these opportunities as we develop and announce them. Follow us on Instagram @youngmicrosurgeons to stay up to date! **RM**



William Zamboni, MD during his tenure as President of ASRM in 2009

“ One of the most important initiatives during my presidency, with the support of the Executive Council, is the establishment of a Young Microsurgeons Group (YMG) within ASRM [for two basic reasons]: 1) several of our young microsurgeons approached me at this year's meeting with this concept; and 2) the fact [that] the ratio of candidate-to-active member applications is increasing.

[These] younger and active candidate members are an extremely talented group of individuals that can contribute greatly to our society. [The] YMG initiative is necessary to make sure our young members have a strong voice in the society so that our candidate-to-active membership conversion rate is solid.

This is truly the future of our society as it stands right now. ”

— Excerpt from Dr. Zamboni's President's Message in *Reconstructive Microsurgery*, Spring-Summer 2009

WOMEN'S MICROSURGERY GROUP

The Women's Microsurgery Group Enhances the 2023 ASRM Meeting Experience



Stephanie Caterson, MD
Chair, Women's Microsurgery Group

This was quite a year for the Women's Microsurgery Group (WMG). Our committee worked tirelessly to prepare a fabulous experience for WMG members at the 2023 ASRM Annual Meeting in Miami, FL. Our events began with the WMG Wellness Workshop held on Thursday, January 19th. The day commenced with a Morning Kickstart workout, then transitioned to our main program entitled "Boundaries and Balance", led by Dr. Alicia Kowalski. Dr. Kowalski is an MD Anderson anesthesiologist and world expert on wellbeing of medical professionals. Together, we delved in to the everyday challenges faced by our group. Dr. Kowalski illustrated methods on how to assess and prioritize work and personal lives. We then moved on to how best set boundaries in order to achieve personal balance. The open forum of the workshop facilitated contributions from the group, from which we all benefitted. Following the didactic portion of the day, we re-centered with a Singing Bowls Mindfulness session. The day wrapped up with a scrumptious dinner at Corsair Restaurant with our Wellness Workshop sponsors – Axogen, Spectros, Allergan Aesthetics, and ViOptix.

For ASRM 2023, the WMG Mentorship Program paired 30 mentees with personalized WMG mentors. The matched duos met early in the conference schedule and the relationships were fostered throughout the meeting. I was lucky enough to be paired with



The WMG Wellness Workshop provided an opportunity to learn ways to achieve work/life balance and practice mindfulness techniques.

the two exceptional ViOptix Travel Scholarship winners, Dr. Kacy Benedict and Katie Zhu, both who were attending their inaugural ASRM meeting!

On Sunday, the WMG Luncheon was once again at full capacity. Our format this year was unique to prior events. Instead of a formal panel discussing one focus, we elected to break into smaller groups with the WMG Committee members acting as topic facilitators. The facilitators rotated among the smaller groups and we were able to cover a lot of territory in the short time allotted to the event. The feedback was very positive, with attendees enjoying the opportunity to meet with many core members of the WMG team.

The WMG Cocktail Reception was a true highlight of the meeting. Held outside beneath the palm trees, fun was had



Left to right: Incoming ASRM president and past WMG chair Dr. Joan Lipa with current chair Dr. Stephanie Caterson and past chairs Drs. Aldona Spiegel, Summer Hanson, and Julie Park

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WOMEN'S MICROSURGERY GROUP

Continued from page 13

by all as we enjoyed our signature cocktail – the WMG - Watermelon Mojito Grande! Many of us were in costume for the 60's themed ASRM Summer of Love Celebration.

Beyond the WMG planned events at ASRM 2023, I would be remiss if I didn't share some personal reflections from the meeting. At the forefront, I



The Watermelon Mojito Grande was the signature cocktail at the WMG Reception

was thrilled to see Dr. Joan Lipa, past WMG Chair, take the reins as the next ASRM president. Dr. Lipa is the second woman to hold this position, after founding ASRM member Dr. Julia Terzis in 2002. Dr. Lipa is admired and respected internationally, and I can't wait



Dr. Stephanie Caterson (far right) and WMG past chairs (from left to right) Drs. Summer Hanson, Joan Lipa and Julie Park at the "Summer of Love" celebration.

to see what she has in store for her presidency. Additionally, I was delighted to see many of WMG surgeons be chosen to participate in the Sewing with the Masters program. My session spanned the breadth of microsurgical teaching – from a learner completely naïve to the scope to a very talented chief resident about to launch. It was a personal highlight and we hope to support this program moving forward.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the WMG Committee members who will be continuing their service including Drs. Noopur Gangopadhyay, Carrie Chu, Amanda Silva, Meredith Collins, Christine Rohde, Andrea Moreira, and Summer Hanson (ex-officio) and welcome our new members Drs. Melissa Poh and Olivia Ho. Together we will work to support the Women's Microsurgery Group throughout the year. **RM**

There were two scholarship recipients in 2023. Both of their reports are presented here.

Reflections of the ASRM Meeting from the WMG ViOptix Travel Scholarship Winners



KATIE ZHU, MS2
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

It was such an honor to receive the ASRM ViOptix Women's Microsurgery Group Travel Grant to attend the 2023 meeting in Miami, Florida!

I am incredibly grateful to the Women's Microsurgery Group and ViOptix for the opportunity. I would be remiss not to thank Dr. Kristen Broderick for being an amazing mentor and championing me for this award.

This meeting was on my radar from last year's scholarship winner and fellow Johns Hopkins medical

student, Jonlin Chen, who touted it as the "best plastic surgery meeting". And she was right! I had an incredible time over the course of four days learning more about the field of reconstructive microsurgery, networking with medical students, residents, and surgeons, and soaking up the Miami sun.

One of the highlights of the meeting was learning how to suture under the microscope with "Sewing with the Masters." I worked with Dr. Jason Ko, who was unfailingly patient as he taught me how to hold the instruments and get adjusted to the magnification. I had a lot of fun, and I can't wait until I have

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WOMEN'S MICROSURGERY GROUP

VIOPTIX TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP
WINNER REFLECTIONS*Continued from page 14*

an opportunity to suture under the microscope again. Another highlight was connecting with the Women's Group through the mentorship program, the luncheon, and the reception. I was paired with Dr. Stephanie Caterson, who was so welcoming and made me feel like a part of the community. At the luncheon, I sat at a table with residents and attendings from both the east and west coast as well as from Finland and Belgium. It was fascinating to hear these women's different perspectives regarding how to



Katie Zhu (left) with Dr. Stephanie Caterson

navigate difficult situations and how to make your voice heard. I enjoyed learning about everyone's experiences depending on their practice location and stage of training, and it was valuable to hear their advice for the younger residents and medical students. It was also a lot of fun to attend the Women's Microsurgery Group

reception and connect with other female medical students. While we all attended different schools, we quickly bonded over our interests in plastic surgery.

I had heard from my mentor, Dr. Broderick, that Best Case/Best Save was many attendees' favorite part of the conference.

These expectations were met as the session was an entertaining and educational two hours learning about complex cases and the creativity needed to tackle them. Attending the "One Hit Wonders" panel the next day was a natural extension of Best Case/Best Save. I enjoyed getting to see more of Dr. Kongkrit Chaiyasate's and Dr. Peirong Yu's cases. These two sessions expanded my understanding of what it means to be a reconstructive microsurgeon – many of these cases would have seemed unfathomable to me before the conference and it was impressive to hear first-hand the surgeon's plan and execution.

As one of my research projects that I worked on over the summer between my first and second year of medical school is on the effects of radiation in autologous breast reconstruction, I was particularly looking forward to attending the "Partial Breast Reconstruction – What Works and What Doesn't in Radiated Breast Deformities" and the "Flap Survived...Breast Not Pretty...What Next? Revisions in Microsurgical Breast Reconstruction" panels. It was poignant to see the clinical and surgical



Learning to suture under the microscope with Dr. Jason Ko

decision making that is undertaken when patients have radiation therapy or have other complications to improve their outcomes, and I appreciated being able to better understand the clinical implications of the research I am conducting.

Attending ASRM reaffirmed my desire to pursue plastic surgery. Before this conference, my understanding of reconstructive microsurgery was limited to breast reconstruction. ASRM provided me with a wealth of new perspectives regarding reconstructive surgery that I will take forward into my medical school experience. The sense of community amongst the attendees was incredibly welcoming and inspiring. ASRM was one of the best conference experiences I have had. I hope I will continue to be a part of the reconstructive microsurgery community and attend future ASRM meetings. **RM**

The other ViOptix scholarship recipient's report follows on page 16

WOMEN'S MICROSURGERY GROUP

VIOPTIX TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP
WINNER REFLECTIONS*Continued from page 15*

**KACY
BENEDICT,
PGY-5**
*University of
Mississippi*

I want to say a huge thank you to both the Women's Microsurgery Group and to ViOptix for providing me the opportunity to attend the ASRM meeting this year! I had such an amazing experience attending the lectures, meeting new people at the social events, and seeing how far the limits can be pushed at the Best Case/Best Save competition. I am currently a PGY-5 plastic surgery resident at the University of Mississippi, and this was my first time attending the ASRM meeting. I was so impressed by all of the presentations I saw and definitely learned a lot.

I was able to attend a lot of excellent lectures throughout the meeting. I particularly enjoyed the Flaps in Head and Neck Trauma – Timing and Treatment Algorithm presentation. The stepwise approach to management of these patients was fantastic and the cases presented were really impressive. I was also very interested in the ASRM panel on Transplantation vs Conventional Reconstruction. It was helpful to see examples of which patients do better with traditional methods of soft tissue reconstruction compared to those that would ultimately benefit more from a face or hand transplantation. I was able to participate in the Sewing with the Masters

program in the lobby and learned some new tips and tricks from Dr. Zuker. It was great to be able to see how different people approach a microsurgical anastomosis and fun to watch medical students and other residents practice throughout the day as I passed through the lobby.



Enjoying the meeting with my attendings Ben McIntyre MD and Laura Humphries MD (and a photobomb by Dr. JP Hong in the background!)

The YMG Microsurgery Fellowship Roundtable was also incredibly helpful, and I want to thank all of the current fellows who took time out of their day to answer questions for those of us going through the match this year or in the future! It was great to hear the fellow's perspectives on their programs and I was able to get a lot of excellent information for the upcoming application cycle.

My favorite educational event throughout the course was the Best Case/Best Save competition.

I loved seeing how the judges interacted between themselves and with the competitors. Seeing the cases presented was inspiring and encouraged us all to think outside the box and continue to find creative solutions to these problems. I also had a great time at the evening social events, especially the Young Microsurgeons Group social on Saturday evening and the Women's Microsurgery Group's social on Monday night. It was so great to reconnect with people from other institutions I had met in the past and to be able to meet so many of the giants in the field of microsurgery.

Overall, I had a phenomenal experience attending the meeting and I can't wait until

the next time I am able to attend. I want to thank my mentor Dr. Ben McIntyre for encouraging me to apply and thank both the WMG and ViOptix again for providing this opportunity through their annual scholarship, it is very much appreciated! **RM**



Celebrating at the WMG reception

FUTURE GROWTH COMMITTEE REPORT

Future Growth Fund: Empowering the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery



Justin M. Sacks, MD, MBA, FACS
Chair, Future Growth Committee

The American Society of Reconstructive Surgery (ASRM) recognizes the importance of investing in its future to ensure the growth and development of the field.

The Future Growth Fund was created to address this optimistic vision of reconstructive microsurgery. By establishing a reliable source of funding, ASRM can continue to innovate and expand the field while empowering its members to make meaningful contributions to the field in clinical, educational, research and innovative endeavors.

In 2023, the Future Growth Fund Committee conducted a comprehensive GAP analysis to assess the current state of ASRM's financial resources and identify areas for improvement. The committee is working closely with the Executive Council (EC) to perform this analysis, which revealed opportunities for growth and areas where additional support could make a significant impact.

The mission of the Future Growth Fund is to secure and manage financial resources to advance the field of reconstructive surgery through research, education, and collaboration. The fund aims to empower ASRM members, support innovative projects, and foster meaningful connections with industry partners and philanthropic organizations. To

achieve the objectives of the Future Growth Fund, the committee is focusing on several key strategies:

The committee is examining the ASRM website to identify opportunities to improve user experience and streamline the donation process, making it easier for potential donors to contribute to the fund, and looking at ways to recognize those who support the ASRM. Working with Dr. Joan Lipa, our current ASRM President, we are optimizing our relationships with

“By fostering relationships with industry partners, ASRM can collaborate on initiatives, secure additional funding, and ensure that the field of reconstructive surgery remains at the forefront of innovation.”

industry by using focus groups to understand better industry needs and identify areas for increased collaboration. By fostering relationships with industry partners, ASRM can collaborate on initiatives, secure additional funding, and ensure that the field of reconstructive surgery remains at the forefront of innovation. We are also highlighting other areas philosophies of giving, such as identifying thankful patients and developing special projects.

The Future Growth Fund Committee is actively soliciting donations and exploring opportunities for collaboration with other foundations interested in our mission “to promote, encourage, foster, and advance the art and science of microsurgery and complex reconstruction” and to establish a forum for teaching, research and free discussion of reconstructive microsurgical methods and principles. Raising philanthropic funds will allow us to increase research funding and knowledge dissemination and create development programs. The committee is committed to providing semi-annual reports to the Executive Council and active membership to ensure transparency and foster engagement.

The growth and support of the Future Growth Fund is essential to the continued growth and success of the ASRM. By contributing to the development of the Future Growth Fund, we are all helping to shape the future of the ASRM, add value for our membership, and improve the lives of countless patients.

If any of our members would like to contribute towards the Future Growth Fund or have collaborative philanthropic ideas, please reach out to the committee members. We look forward to serving the ASRM in these endeavors. **RM**

Committee Members Drs. Carolyn De La Cruz, Steven Moran and Brett Phillips