

WOMEN'S MICROSURGERY GROUP

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fortunate and excited that interest in both the ASRM and the WMG has significantly increased and we have received many excellent applications. The 2019 Resident/Fellow scholarship was awarded to Dr. Christina Vargas of the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and the medical student scholarship awardee was Ms. Cara Black of Georgetown University School of Medicine in Washington, D.C.

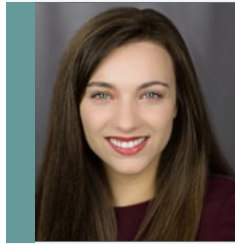


The WMG Reception gave members a chance to enjoy some down time with colleagues.

The WMG Mentorship Program recognizes the importance of developing a strong foundation and continues to strengthen with improved matching criteria, connecting Mentees with Mentors that possess the qualities the Mentees are most interested in. The program has not only been successful but has demonstrated the value of creating lasting and effective relationships between Mentee and Mentor.

If you would like to become a mentor, mentee, or get more information, please check out our webpage: www.microsurg.org/ WMG. **RM**

Reflections from a WMG ViOptix Travel Scholarship Winner



*By Cara Black
MD Candidate*

I had an absolutely fantastic time this winter at the

2019 ASRM Annual Meeting as a winner of the Women's Microsurgery Group (WMG) ViOptix Travel Scholarship! This was a great honor and provided me with many opportunities for learning and networking amongst aspiring and current microsurgeons. Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on my experience.

I was humbled to meet the wonderful women in WMG at the reception and group panels. WMG is composed of talented female microsurgeons who value passing their knowledge and compassion onto other aspiring microsurgeons as part of their legacy in plastic surgery. Meeting the many professors, leaders of professional organizations, and innovative researchers in WMG was inspiring and provided me with tangible role models to emulate in the field. This year's "Defining Career Success and Preventing Burnout" panel allowed me to gain wisdom and tools to make tough choices when prioritizing between career, family, and hobbies.

The theme of each WMG event was mentorship. Mentorship has always been something that is very important to me. As a

former Teach For America 12th grade physics teacher at an all-girls' school in Chicago, I was a mentor to many young women, some after school nearly daily as they progressed through the college admission process. The core value that drove me as a teacher was encouraging women to pursue science, medicine, and engineering. At this stage in my training as a medical student pursuing a career in microsurgery, I am now the seeker of mentorship and guidance rather than the provider. I am very grateful to have been given the gift of a mentor from within the WMG, Dr. Aldona Spiegel. Her mentorship will help me to develop the best version of my professional self by guiding me through important career decisions and providing valuable networking connections. I am also blessed with mentors at my own institution, Drs. Kenneth

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Cara Black, medical student at Georgetown University School of Medicine (right), meets her new WMG mentor Dr. Aldona Spiegel (left), at the Women's Microsurgery Group Reception.

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REFLECTIONS OF A TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP WINNER

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Fan, Karen Kim Evans, and David Song who have been invaluable to me as helpful and caring advisers.

In addition to attending the WMG panels and events, I also sat in on many engaging lectures at ASRM. The “Battle of the Masters” event, where master microsurgeons compared approaches to reconstructive problems, was highly educational and entertaining. The surgeons battled the profunda artery perforator (PAP) vs. diagonal upper gracilis (DUG) flap for breast reconstruction, groin lymph node transfer vs. laparoscopic omentum transfer, female-to-male radial forearm vs. anterolateral



Learning microsurgical techniques in a Sewing with the Masters session with Dr. Theodore Kung.



Flamingos taking a dip at the JW Marriott.

thigh (ALT) flap, male-to-female penile inversion vs. intestinal vaginoplasty, digit amputation vs. salvage, and others. Comparing two surgical approaches helped me to understand details of the individual procedures themselves. I also often found myself laughing out loud during the fun comradery and passionate discourse between surgeons in this session.

At the “Sewing with the Masters” sessions, I learned microsurgical skills with Dr. Theodore Kung and was fascinated with the precise and careful techniques. I also had the opportunity to learn about “Surgical Ergonomics” from Drs. Gordon Lee, David Song and Scott Hollenbeck. This was a fantastic lecture because I learned valuable operating room stretches and important self-care advice. Another session highlight was the “Best Case/Best Save.” The cases presented here solidified my passion for pursuing a career in microsurgery because the surgeons presenting these cases helped their patients in so many life-changing ways. A few of my favorites were scalp reconstruction after a factory accident scalp avulsion by Dr. Joan Lipa, face and scalp reconstruction after a severe dog bite using various flaps by Dr. Frederic Deleyiannis, and simultaneous abdominal wall and small bowel transplant by Dr. Detlev Erdmann. I was impressed by the challenging nature of these fascinating cases.

Another notable experience at the meeting was hearing the story about Dr. Gordon Holt’s role in the development of the venous coupler device when he was a

fourth-year medical student. This was especially inspiring to me because I am currently on a plastic surgery research year and will be pursuing a career in academic plastic surgery. It was inspiring to hear a story of how a medical student can help to advance the field in impactful ways through hard work in research.



Cara with annual meeting special honoree Dr. Gordon Holt.

After attending the lectures and networking events, I was able to enjoy the beautiful location of the meeting – the JW Marriott in Desert Springs, California. I saw the magnificent birds around the resort including flamingos, hawks, and parrots and enjoyed the beautiful spa and pool. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Spiegel and the rest of WMG, Dr. Joseph Disa and ASRM, ViOptix, and everyone that I met at the conference for such a fantastic and inspiring learning opportunity. **RM**

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