



# Corporal Michael J Crescenz VA Medical Center Update



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Since last year we have had notable staff transitions and developments while continuing to support clinical care, research, and education. In August 2017, three pillars of UPENN Orthopaedics transitioned from the CPL Crescenz VAMC: Ernest J. Gentchos, Malcolm Ecker, and John D. Kelly, IV. Drs. Gentchos and Ecker are highlighted later. Dr. Kelly served seven years as shared faculty. His multiple contributions include compassion, insight, humor, and, unquestionably, surgical skill. His invaluable presence not only benefitted our patients and residents but also honored his U.S.M.C. father's legacy of virtue and respect. Dr. Kelly earned "America's Most Compassionate Doctors' Patient Choice" Award in 2011 and his most recent column in *Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research* is "Forgiveness." He will continue to interface with the VA through the Leadership Lecture series he developed. Dr. Kelly remains active in multiple roles for UPENN Orthopaedics, including Director, Shoulder Surgery, Sports Medicine and Co-Director, Sports Medicine Fellowship.

We welcomed three new surgical staff and one research volunteer. Kathryn O'Connor, MD MSPT joined us in July 2017 as our Foot and Ankle Surgery subspecialist, adding another dimension for foot and ankle education to the residency program. Her fellowship was at Washington University School of Medicine. Drs. Andrew Milby and Robert J. Wilson, II joined our staff in September 2017 after completing specialty fellowships earlier in the year. Dr. Milby, a graduate of the UPENN Class of 2016 Orthopaedics Residency, returned after his Spine Fellowship at Emory University. His presence complements the Spine Clinic with Dr. Harvey Smith. Dr. Milby is organizing a multiple disciplinary Spine Conference. This will add to our regular Rounds with the Chairman, Dr. L. Scott Levin and safety (M&M) conference with Dr. Eric Hume. Dr. Wilson completed his Orthopaedic Oncology Fellowship at Vanderbilt University after residency there. Dr. Wilson is developing a needed Oncology Section and is very active with our total joint arthroplasty patients. Both Drs. Milby and Wilson are dedicated teachers who also provide essential subspecialty education. Annamarie Horan, MPA PhD joined us as a professional volunteer in June 2017. As Director of Clinical Research for the UPENN Departments of Orthopaedic Surgery, she will assist us with development and execution of clinical research. She brings expertise in development and implementation of clinical trials and studies. Dr. Horan's father served five years during World War II and her eldest daughter will be commissioned as an Ensign after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy later this spring.

In the realm of basic science research, our staff shine with on-going VA funded studies. Drs. Joseph Bernstein, Andrew Kuntz, Harvey Smith, and David Steinberg continue to conduct their studies along with providing clinical and surgical care. Dr. Smith has the distinction of capturing both a Merit Grant and a Career Development Award. Jaimo Ahn, MD PhD has numerous research grants and was promoted to Associate Professor. Congratulations, Dr. Ahn!

From January 1 to December 31, 2017, 4897 visits were recorded for the outpatient Orthopaedic Surgery Clinic. In November 2017, our facility was named the "hub" for surgical integration for the eastern region of VISN 4. Clinics are structured around supervising staff and specialty, now increased to four days a week. A weekly Hand Clinic will start in April. Providing indispensable and knowledgeable support are two exceptional orthopaedic physician assistants, Mitchell "Chip" Staska, MPA-C and John Wheeler, PA-C. Mr. Staska is a regular instructor at the University of the Sciences Physicians' Assistant degree program. His expertise was on display for our new electronic orthopaedic "e-consult". Mr. Wheeler, a U.S. Navy retiree who served in the Gulf for one year for Operation Iraqi Freedom, is dedicated to the Spine Team.

In the arena of surgical care, we performed 386 operative procedures last year. A new operating room schedule includes four days of block time. Each of our three new surgeons has block time. The VA implemented a full time nursing position for pre-operative patient education and surgical scheduling. Kathleen Sweeney, RN, a highly experienced surgical nurse, is performing these duties and assisting us in development of this position. Her unwavering dedication to our patients is both genuine and personal as she has a son in the U.S.M.C. Catherine Linowski, RN MSN was recently named as the full time orthopaedic nurse. She is a retiree from the US Army Nurse Corps, having started her career as a medic. We welcome her vast experience from outside care coordination and surgical nursing.

We have made significant inroads managing special needs veterans, surgical timing, and out patient visit coding. To address the multiple disciplinary needs of the patient with osteoarthritis not requiring surgery, my vision of an OA clinic was realized. Carla Scanzello, MD PhD; Edna Schwab, MD; Adam Cooper, MD; Keith M. Robinson, MD; and Pat Mosko, CRNP participate weekly specialty clinic held under the direction of Rheumatology with Orthopaedic consultation. Dr. Scanzello submitted our first grant application to evaluate this coordinated care. Improved coordination of care outside

the VA is being developed with UPENN to include surgery for VA beneficiaries at UPENN surgical facilities. This approach has been very productive in federal medicine.

Academic, clinical, and research partnering is a VA hallmark. We have requested purchase of an arthroscopic simulator. Chief resident, Chia Wu, MD MBA spearheaded the implementation microvascular training in December 2017. The VA acquired loupes and materials to support a microvascular curriculum at the VA and the UPENN Simulation Center. The historical origin of such partnerships begins with a UPENN connection, Paul B. Magnuson, MD, Perelman School of Medicine Class of 1908. You may recognize Dr. Magnuson's name from the Magnuson Stack procedure for chronic recurrent shoulder instability. You should recognize his name as the endowed Professorship of UPENN Bone and Joint Surgery, established in 1974. This distinguished title is held by the Chair of Orthopaedics, L. Scott Levin, a U.S. Army veteran whose grandfather served in World War I as a UPENN trained otolaryngologist and whose Silver Star awardee father served in the U.S. Navy. Paul B. Magnuson, MD, then Professor of Surgery and Chair, Department of Bone and Joint Surgery at Northwestern University, was recruited as a consultant to the U.S. Army Surgeon General during World War II. Afterward, he remained as a consultant to develop prosthetic research at the VA. Ultimately his work resulted in major prosthetic advancements, congressionally funded research, and private sector-government collaborations. Importantly, he was responsible for implementing residencies in VA facilities close to medical schools in 1946. He structured his revolutionary program around physicians approved by a dean's committee to include professor consultants, VA staff, and resident physicians. This radical new structure, requiring many crusades, removed the oversight from politicians. Serving as Chief Medical Director of the VA from 1948-1951, this orthopaedic surgeon is responsible for the successful integration of VA resources to support medical schools for clinical care, research, and education. Currently, over 70% of U.S. physicians have trained at a VA. Over 120,000 trainees rotate through a VA annually. Each UPENN orthopaedic resident will join these ranks upon completion of training.

At our VA, UPENN residents had the distinction of learning from two noteworthy veterans whose lives are detailed in recent prior UPOJ editions dedicated to them. They are shared faculty, Dr. Gentchos and Dr. Ecker. Their genuine commitment to education and their patients define their careers. Dr. Gentchos's extraordinary personal history starts in Greece, surviving World War II, immigrating to America, and becoming a doctor. He served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps with a 13-month tour of duty in Vietnam. His UPENN career began with his orthopaedic residency at the Graduate Hospital. Dr. Gentchos supported education ever since. He was the attending for our Friday general clinics for eight years, donating his VA salary for scholarships to students in high school, college, and medical school. Since 2000, UPENN honors him with Ernest J. Gentchos Lectureship, a yearly

Grand Rounds focusing on shoulder and elbow. Dr. Gentchos has retired. He is now chronicling his experiences in essays, focusing on his teachers. Don't end your day unless you can answer his trademark question: "What have I learned today?"

Dr. Ecker's remarkable story starts right here in Philadelphia. He is an alumnus of Temple University and its Lewis Katz School of Medicine. After several years of training at Albert Einstein Medical Center and Boston City Hospital, he joined the U.S. Air Force Medical Corps for 10 years, serving for two years at Plattsburgh Air Force Base as the only physician for 18,000. He completed his orthopaedic surgery residency at Hospital for Special Surgery, including 12 months at the Bronx VA. Dr. Ecker's roles at our VA encompassed surgery and clinical care. Most recently, he was a surgical coach for our chief residents. Dr. Ecker's 20-year affiliation with our VA is among the longest in any department. He remains a consultant at CHOP with a regular clinic there. His practice has been diverse, in children and adults, ranging from fractures, spine, and reconstruction. A prolific author and innovator, Dr. Ecker's contributions remain in the most recent edition of Campbell's Orthopaedics.

While very different people, both Dr. Gentchos and Dr. Ecker have much in common. They are true examples of shared faculty envisioned by Dr. Magnuson. Both worked successfully in the private and academic sectors, developing strong bonds to UPENN. Both are humble, industrious, inquisitive, and ethical people who always focused on the patient. Both steadfastly support resident education. Both are veterans with intense military service during Vietnam. Both dedicated their time, energy, and heart to our VA beneficiaries. Both value their families. We can learn from their example and follow it. Fair winds and following seas, Dr. Gentchos and Dr. Ecker.



Chia Wu (PGY5) in the new microsurgery simulation lab at the Philadelphia VAMC.