

# NEWS WOMEN IN NEUROSURGERY



## President's Message

### WINS: Outside the box

When I attended my first WINS meeting a decade ago, I was fairly stupefied. The feeling I had was like seeing a professional athlete effortlessly do something I had practiced and practiced but never quite been able to "nail" ...until I saw it. Or like operating with a master neurosurgeon, and having him make a difficult procedure seem all at once impossible and *sooo* easy, like a magic trick.

After regaining my composure, I remember looking around the room and thinking: "Wow!" Here is a group of women who really "have it together." Smart. Warm. Precise. Strong. Balanced. Polished. Feminine. How I want to be. To a woman, each in her own unique way, embodying something I had been aiming toward, without a clear target, for years.

I am sometimes asked, "Why WINS?" After all, I've been quite successful on a fairly level\* playing field for most of my career. "Hey," a favorite gentleman colleague teases, "don't you have enough on your plate?" Or, from a tough lady colleague (who pointedly does not belong to WINS): "I worked hard to be one of the guys. I didn't care for the strident women's groups then, and I don't see the need to set myself apart now."

Instead of excess baggage or a higher gender barrier, WINS represented a turning point: I could forget about trying to be something I wasn't, like "one of the guys," and concentrate on being my very best at something I was, like "a gal with good

hands." Beyond my own epiphany, WINS illustrates a *modus operandi* that may benefit our entire profession.

"We come together to share successes and discuss our problems," said Dr. Cushing in the early years of the Harvey Cushing Society. That is the rationale for WINS, with the caveat that the successes and problems of women in neurosurgery often differ from those of men. Interestingly, over the years, I've watched issues that I used to think of as mostly "women's issues," such as mentoring and balance, become critical to my colleagues outside of WINS.

What are the top challenges facing neurosurgeons today? Medical liability reform? Patient satisfaction? Declining reimbursement? Rising costs? Fraud and abuse? Residency program restrictions? These challenges share a common source based not so much on what we've said or done, but how we've done it. If actions speak louder than words, then attitudes shout. As a profession, we have excelled with technique and science and struggled with spirit and art. The typical neurosurgical approach to challenge goes like this: "I'm smarter, quicker, stronger, tougher, more talented, and just plain better than you are, so back off!" Yes, this attitude is effective, especially with insentient objects, like AVMs.

Neurosurgery is a risky, exacting field that demands precise focus,



Denise Crute, M.D., F.A.C.S.

permits little margin for error, and punishes small egos. The personal characteristics that may prove crucial in the operating room can be crippling outside it. When repeatedly engaged in tasks where the world must fall away or shrink to the size of an operative field, it is easy to forget that we live in the wide world. It is hard to remember other's views, hard to broaden our focus and connect with those around us. How many brilliant and successful neurosurgeons with disastrous personal lives do know? "TNTC\*\*," a pathologist friend responds wryly. WINS, perhaps by necessity, has always emphasized perspective, empathy, integrity, and adaptability. Emulating these traits and the connected negotiating strategies of women may offer the best solution yet to all those difficult problems outside our most comfortable and familiar box, the operating room.

*\*Editor's note: Dr. Crute hails from, and currently resides in, very mountainous terrain, which probably affects her definition of "level."*

*\*\* Too numerous to count.*

FALL 2003

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## WINS MISSION

*To inspire, encourage, and enable women surgeons to realize their professional and personal goals.*

## Global perspectives in neurosurgery

*"We must combine high technology with common sense... and recognize that surgery is never a one-man show"*  
-Jacques Brotchi

The WINS reception held in conjunction with the AANS annual meeting in San Diego on April 29, 2003 was entitled Cultural Connections: Bringing Global Perspective to Neurosurgery. A "standing room only" crowd enjoyed an evening of inspired presentations by international colleagues. Dr. Jacques Brotchi, of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (WFNS) and Dr. Tetsuo Kanno of the Asian International Neurosurgery Programs led an informative and lively discussion with participants from around the world, including Nepal and Honduras.

The diverse and thought-provoking program reminded us of the tremendous impact our local leadership and collegial relationships can have in a changing world. We were urged to uphold a high standard of care for our patients, our institutions, and our communities, regardless of our nationality or resources. We were humbled by the achievements of our international colleagues, who do so very much with so very little.

Dr. Brotchi, Dr. Kanno, and numerous others spoke of the common challenges faced by neurosurgeons throughout the world. Whether

bringing neurosurgical care to an underserved area or removing a spinal cord tumor, "we must combine high technology with common sense ...and recognize that neurosurgery is *never* a one-man show," said Dr. Brotchi.

The power and strength of a single individual working within "the microcosm" to change "the macrocosm" for the better was aptly illustrated by our dynamic international guests. The commitment of WINS and the AANS to strengthening cultural connections and expanding international relationships will doubtless have far-reaching implications for a better world.

## Secretary-Treasurer's Report

WINS continues to thrive. Although women still comprise a small percentage of all neurosurgeons, our numbers are increasing, and our contributions far outweigh our numbers. For example, Witness the success of the WINS-sponsored leadership course at the 2002 AANS meeting, or this year's new edition of the popular brochure *So, You Want to be a Neurosurgeon?*, by WINS past Presidents Dr. Karin Muraszko and Dr. Deborah Benzil.

As of April, 2003, we have 215 WINS members. The breakdown is as follows: Lifetime members: 7, 10 year members: 2, 5 year members: 7, 1 year members: 136, Resident members: 62, Friends of WINS: 1.

An updated membership roster is available upon request. Please provide me with any address, telephone, or email changes.

WINS remains committed to supporting the professional and

personal needs of women neurosurgeons. We fund scholarships for residents to attend national meetings with the specific objective of promoting the growth and advancement of our members. By working together with organizations such as the CNS and AANS, we hope to realize the full potential of all neurosurgeons, regardless of gender. Neurosurgical excellence is achieved through the seamless integration of personal and professional goals.



Holly S. Gilmer-Hill, M.D.

Secretary Treasurer  
2002-2003

President Elect 2003--2004





Vickie Falcone

Would you like more ease and less conflict in your relationships...both on and off the job? Do you want practical, proven advice that you can put to use immediately?

Vickie Falcone, author of the **Parenting With Soul** course and **Buddha Never Raised Kids and Jesus Didn't Drive Carpool**, is the Alexa Canaday lecturer at the upcoming WINS reception in association with the Congress of Neurological Surgeons annual meeting in Denver. Although best known for her humorous, inspired, and practical advice to parents, her background is in corporate and police training. Her audiences leave with the information, the motivation, and the practical skills to improve their lives. Vickie is a

magnetic presenter, using true stories that people immediately identify with. A passionate agent for transformation, she's known for helping people change a self-limiting past into a new paradigm of peace and joy.

In the WINS program scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2003, 7pm in the Mattie Silks Room at the Denver Marriott, Vickie will show you how to minimize challenges, maximize cooperation, and create more peaceful interactions at home and work. You will:

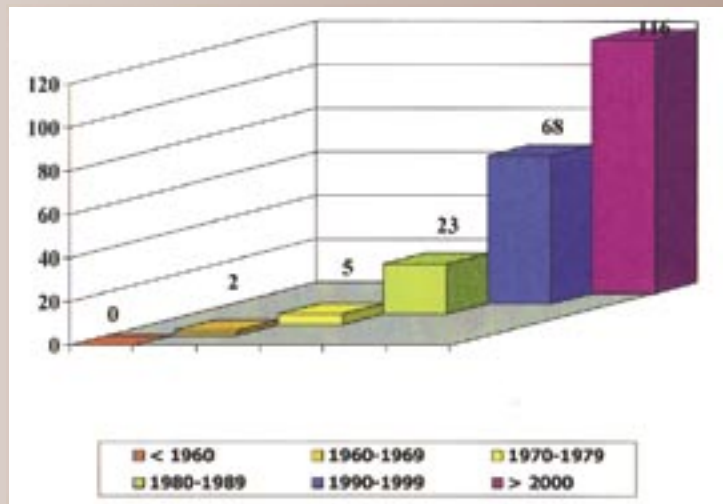
- Understand and feel the emotional needs universal to everyone from your patients to your peers.
- Increase cooperation by connecting more and talking less.

**How to create more balance and peace at work: Connect!**

- Learn the difference between low-, medium-, and high-level connecting.
- Discover the lasting benefits of high-level connecting
- Replace feelings of anger, resentment, and insecurity with confidence and joy.

## Certified United States Women Neurosurgeons

The growth in the number of board certified women neurosurgeons in the U.S. is illustrated in this graph. The face of "the best and brightest" in neurosurgery today may look different today than twenty years ago, and will look more different twenty years hence. WINS continues as an agent for change and provider of a forum for issues not addressed elsewhere.





## Sunday, October 19 ~ 1:00 - 5:00 Career Development for Women in Neurosurgery:

### Janet Bickel



"Janet Bickel has done more than anyone else to advance women in academic medicine. Under her leadership there has been considerable progress but more needs to be done. I know of no one more qualified than Janet to lead this work."

—Robert G. Petersdorf, M.D.

*Distinguished Professor of Medicine, University of Washington School of Medicine, and formerly President, Association of American Medical Colleges*

### Roberta Bondar, M.D.

Science and photography have always been linked in Dr. Roberta Bondar's life. She earned her medical degree at McMaster University with a special interest in space medicine. After completing board certification in neurology, she studied at Tufts New England Medical Center, specializing in neuro-ophthalmology.

Her study of how we see and record the world around us reached a very literal climax in January 1992 with the rare opportunity to view the earth from space aboard the space shuttle Discovery.

"Although I cared deeply about the environment before I flew in space, I became passionate about it during my flight. My sense of responsibility reaches beyond my lifetime to the future generations of the planet."



### Susan Johnson, M.D.

Obstetrician, Gynecologist, Epidemiologist, and Associate Dean at the University of Iowa College of Medicine, Dr. Johnson is treasured for her poetic, scholarly, and insightful advice to students and physicians. From her three basic steps for integrating "work life" and "personal life" to her "walking meditations" she expertly guides the journey along "the road to a life of medicine."

*This Sunday afternoon practical course features three dynamic speakers who will teach effective strategies for enhancing motivation and setting goals for professional development and personal achievement. Course director Beverly C. Walters has assembled a truly stellar panel for effecting positive change at work and home.*



## WINS Highlights



### Saturday October 18 • 1:00 -5:00 Practical Courses Functional Neurosurgery: Stimulation, Augmentation and Destruction

Course Director: Robert E. Gross

Faculty: Philip A. Starr, Ali R. Rezai,  
Steven B. Wilkinson, *Aviva*  
*Abosch*, Thomas B. Freeman

**Learning Objective:** This course will provide a detailed discussion of the indications, instrumentation, and techniques involved in neural stimulation, augmentation, and ablation for various nervous system diseases. Upon completion of this course, participants will have an understanding of stimulation, augmentation and destruction as related to functional neurosurgery.

### Sunday, October 19 • 1:00 - 5:00 Career Development for Women in Neurosurgery

Course Director: *Beverly C. Walters*

Faculty: *Roberta L. Bondar*,  
*Janet Bickel*,  
*Susan Johnson*

See feature on previous page.

### Sunday, October 19 • 8:00 am - 12:00 Emerging Technologies in Lumbar Fusion

Course Directors: Daniel K. Resnick,  
Joseph T. Alexander

Faculty: Brian R. Subach, *Karin*  
*Swartz*, Harel Deutsch, Mick J.  
Perez-Cruet, J. Patrick Johnson,  
Junichi Mizuno, Richard D.  
Fessler, Gregory Trost, Michael  
W. Groff, Mark McLaughlin

**Learning Objective:** This course will provide an in-depth review of current and future technologies applicable to arthrodesis of the lumbar spine. Upon completion of this course, participants will understand technologies appropriate for specific clinical conditions, and describe their application.

### Monday October 20 • 2:00 - 5:30 Special Course I Fundamentals of Evidence Based Clinical Practice

Course Director: *Beverly C. Walters*

Moderators: *Beverly C. Walters*,  
Stephen J. Haines

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will become familiar with the concepts of evidence-based medicine and their application to daily neurosurgical practice. Following this course, participants should be able to identify the different kinds of studies that support neurosurgical decision-making, understand each kind of study as to its ultimate use, critically evaluate neurosurgical evidence for quality, choose appropriate methodology for different clinical questions and summarize the evidence and understand the limitations of its application to practice.

### Monday, October 20 • 12:30 - 2:00 Multimodality Treatment of Malignant Gliomas

Moderator: James T. Rutka

Faculty: Nalin Gupta, *Linda Liao*,  
Meic H. Schmidt,  
Ronald E. Warnick

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will be able to appreciate the various treatment modalities appropriate for the treatment of malignant gliomas and understand current research pertaining to the management of malignant gliomas. Participants will be able to discuss outcomes associated with various treatment modalities for malignant gliomas.

### Monday, October 20 • 12:30 - 2:00 Surgical Treatment of Movement Disorders

Moderator: Roy A.E. Bakay

Faculty: *Isabelle M. Germano*,  
Michael G. Kaplitt, Ali R.  
Rezai, Phillip A. Starr

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will be aware of the types of movement disorders amenable to surgical treatment and understand the surgical techniques and outcomes for treating movement disorders.

### Monday, October 20 • 12:30 - 2:00 Neurosurgical Practice: Enhancement, Compliance and Development

Moderator: William D. Tobler

Faculty: *Debra Mills*, Philip W. Tally,  
Troy M. Tippet, Craig A. Van  
Der Veer

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will appreciate various techniques that can enhance neurosurgical practice, discuss important compliance matters relevant to the practice of neurosurgery and be aware of various tools helpful in the development of a neurosurgical practice.

### Tuesday, October 21 • 12:30 - 2:00 Skull Base Approaches: What, When and How

Moderator: Jon H. Robertson

Faculty: John Diaz Day, Amin  
Kassam, Ali F. Krisht, *Gail*  
*Linskey Rosseau*

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will understand the techniques available in skull base surgery and be able to discuss when it is appropriate to use a skull base procedure. Participants will understand the key steps in the successful execution of a skull base approach.

### Tuesday, October 21 • 12:30 - 2:00 Spinal Fusion: Biochemical and Biomechanical Approaches

Moderator: *Julie E. York*

Faculty: Robert F. Heary, Junichi  
Mizuno, Eric J. Woodard, Seth  
M. Zeidman, David A. Vincent

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will understand how to evaluate new biochemical advances available for augmentation of spinal fusion and discuss the biomechanics relevant to spinal fusions in the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine.

The majority of women in neurosurgery have long been support staff, not surgeons. We are assistants, associates, or practitioners who grew into neurosurgical positions from nursing or physician assistant programs. And we don't make the coffee.

I review a lot of job applications and resumes for neurosurgical positions. Over the past few years job descriptions have become eclectic. "Wanted: High energy individual with great people skills for a varied patient population. This individual will assist in surgery, do hospital rounds, schedule surgery, write orders, do H+Ps, take call, and help with coding and billing. An ongoing research project will occasionally require after-hours data analysis." The secretary still makes the coffee.

I've met some of these people. They are all the ads ask for and more. They are part of a long line of neurosurgical associates, proudly beginning with Dr. Louise Eisenhardt. She came to work for Dr. Harvey Cushing in 1915 when his career was really taking off. Dr. Eisenhardt was given a monograph to "usher through the publishing process" while he went to Europe to lecture and ended up being his "left hand woman" (that's where she sits in the group photos) and co-author of many of his publications. She assisted in surgery and clinic, organized

and ran the brain tumor registry, developed special stains and maintained histological slides for all of Dr. Cushing's patients, over 2000. She even served as president of the Cushing Society (later AANS).

Dr. Cushing's biographers refer to Louise Eisenhardt as his "associate." Neurosurgery is a big hard job that takes a lot of associates. From the outset, neurosurgeons have wisely taken the team approach to provide better patient care.

All surgery is tense and busy, but not like neurosurgery. Good and bad things happen in a flash, requiring instant decisions from every member of the team. In the



*Dora Beth Parsons, Ph.D., P.A.-C., choosing between "boy" coffee and "girl" coffee.*

## "I don't make the coffee"

morning, I can't page the boss and say, "Mrs. Jones talked to me today!" When surgery is in 10 minutes, I have 9 more patients to see, and I don't have the films yet. I want to talk about the readings from the Licoxx probe, and the nurse says, "Your next patient is up. Can you help me with this drain?" Often the good things are fleeting moments that go unnoticed and unshared and some problems seem to smolder for years. In no field more than neurosurgery must one remember the Japanese Proverb: "fall

down six times, stand up seven." The PA and nursing organizations, though helpful, do not, cannot, offer a forum for exchange like a neurosurgical organization.

The neurosurgical associates are increasing in number, particularly with the residency program cutbacks. The AANS, CNS, and WINS will be instrumental in providing associate teaching, training, exposure to the latest technology, and a place to exchange ideas. Neurosurgery is complex and beautiful, and getting

more so all the time. The whole team needs to keep training and refining and taking time for a cappuccino, double mocha, or latte.

*"Fall down  
six times,  
stand up  
seven."*

*Japanese  
Proverb*

## WINS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please return this form with your updated demographics. Additional contributions are welcome.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred form of contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### Members Dues Categories:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One-year Membership .....\$50  | <input type="checkbox"/> Five-year Membership.....\$250  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ten-year Membership .....\$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Membership .....\$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resident Membership .....\$0   | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of WINS .....\$50       |

### Members Donor Categories: (For contributions in addition to required dues)

- For Louise Eisenhardt Resident Travel Scholarship \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Corporation: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Corporate Donor Categories:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Patron ..... \$5,000          | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Benefactor .....\$2500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Founding Member .....\$10,000 |   |

*Please make check payable to Women in Neurosurgery and remit to:*  
 Kimberly Page, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer WINS  
 c/o American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
 5550 Meadowbrook Drive  
 Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008





American  
Association of  
Neurological  
Surgeons



## AANS/CNS

Women in Neurosurgery  
5550 Meadowbrook Drive  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008



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*Greg Mortenson and student*

*If we truly want a legacy  
of peace for our children,  
we need to understand  
that this is a war  
that will ultimately  
be won with books,  
not with bombs.*

## Greg Mortenson: Fighting terror with books

Greg Mortenson, the upcoming Ruth Kerr Jacoby lecturer for the WINS reception at the 2004 AANS annual meeting in Orlando, fights terrorism. With books.

In 1993, Greg, a former U.S. Army medic, founded the Central Asia Institute (CAI) and began raising funds to build schools in Pakistan. The first school in Korphe was completed in 1996. The CAI has completed a total of 28 school buildings, 15 water projects, and 4 women's vocational centers.

Greg's quiet campaign against Islamic fundamentalism is based on a simple idea: building secular schools and promoting education, particularly for girls, in regions that are hotbeds of terrorism will extinguish support for extremist sects such as the Taliban.

"We've spent billions of dollars building a wall around America with homeland security, but we also need to reach out to build bridges. If we

try to resolve terrorism with military might and nothing else, then we will be no safer than we were before 9/11. In the long term, we have to help feed and clothe people where terrorists are recruiting volunteers. And we have to educate them—especially the girls. We have to prove to them that the world can be a better place. If we truly want a legacy of peace for our children, we need to understand that this is a war that will ultimately be won with books, not with bombs."

Providing education for girls directly helps to lower birth rates and infant mortality, as well as the ignorance and poverty which fuel the fires of religious extremism. Because the girls are the ones who remain at home and are the ones who instill the values, educating the girls is a long-term, cheap, and effective way to combat terrorism.

Find out more about Greg and the Central Asia institute on the web at [www.ikat.org](http://www.ikat.org). Ikat is the extraordinary silk fabric woven throughout Central Asia. Each strand is individually dyed, then woven into stunning, vibrant patterns which are recognized from village to village. It symbolizes the strength, beauty and resilience of the people of Central Asia.