

WOMEN IN NEUROSURGERY



President's Message: Our History, Our Leaders and Our Future

2010-2011 were exceptional years for Women in Neurosurgery (WINS). 2011 marked the anniversary of the 22nd year of WINS! We are proud of the longevity of the organization, but more importantly, of the accomplishments and leadership its members have provided.

Leadership was a major emphasis of the past 2 years for WINS. The group continues to foster and mentor women throughout Medicine and the Surgical sub-specialties and through these efforts has shepherded the careers of numerous successful women physician and surgeons.

Additionally, members of WINS continue to make history in the realm of leadership. This edition of Women in Neurosurgery News focuses on **our history, our leaders and our future.**

As recently as a decade ago, women in neurosurgery only peppered the landscape of leadership in the field. This small, but vigilant group held the reins of leadership and the responsibilities bestowed. The standing of women in the field today rests largely on these pioneers. This year several women hold ranks in academics and in leadership roles in medicine and organized neurosurgery. WINS recognizes and honors their ongoing contribution.

This edition is dedicated to our past, including Dr. Jakoby (the 1st ABNS Certified Woman in the US) and to our future, the many women who now lead.

We are honored and appreciative that several of our luminaries, Drs. Muraszko, Benzil and Ullman, have agreed to share their experiences, accomplishments and advice. The following pages contain their candid, personal and inspirational responses to our inquiries.



Odette Harris, MD, MPH
WINS President

Resident Awardee:

Women In Neurosurgery (WINS), Louise Eisenhardt Award

Detection of Tumor Indicators of Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma in Cerebrospinal Fluid, Serum and Urine

Amanda Muhs Saratsis, MD, is currently a fifth-year neurosurgery resident at Georgetown University Hospital, and is studying the biology of pediatric brainstem glioma in a laboratory at the Center for Genetic Medicine Research at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Saratsis earned her medical degree from the

University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine, where she received the Warren H. Cole Surgery Society Award for Excellence in Surgery, as well as nominations to the Gold Humanism and Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Societies.

A Chicago native, Dr. Saratsis attended Northwestern University as an undergraduate, earning dual majors and departmental honors in

molecular biology and psychology with a minor in philosophy, while also studying piano performance at both the Northwestern University School of Music and the Chicago Music Institute.

Upon completion of her residency, Dr. Saratsis plans to pursue fellowship training in pediatric neurosurgery.



Autumn 2011 INSIDE

2

Dr. Karin Muraszko Biography

3

Dr. Karin Muraszko Q&A

4-5

Dr. Karin Muraszko Q&A continued

6-7

Dr. Deborah L. Benzil Biography and Q&A

8-9

Dr. Jamie Ullman Biography and Q&A

9

Annual Receptions

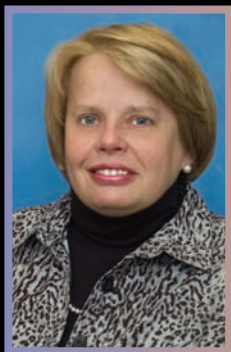
10

Progress Reports

11

Meet the Officers

Our Luminaries



Karin M. Muraszko, MD

Professor and Chair,
University of Michigan
Department of
Neurosurgery

Co-Founder WINS



Dr. Karin M. Muraszko Biography

Karin M. Muraszko, MD, was born on June 19, 1955 in Jersey City, New Jersey. She was educated at Yale University, having received a B.S. with a double major in history and biology in 1977. She is a graduate of Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1981. She did her internship, neurosurgical training, and pediatric neurosurgical training at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center - the New York Neurological Institute. She completed her training in 1988. Dr. Muraszko was then a Senior Staff Fellow at the National Institutes of Health-NINDS in the Surgical Neurology Branch from 1988 to 1990.

Dr. Muraszko arrived at the University of Michigan in January of 1990. She became Chief of the Pediatric Neurosurgery Service in 1995 and was appointed Chair of the Department in 2005 with the distinction of being the first female chair of an academic neurosurgical department in the United States. She has served on numerous committees within the Congress

of Neurological Surgeons, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the American College of Surgeons, the Pediatric Section of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, and the American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery. She is on the executive board and is former president of Women in Neurosurgery. Dr. Muraszko was appointed the first female Director of the American Board of Neurological Surgeons in 2008.

Dr. Muraszko's research interests include experimental therapies for the treatment of pediatric brain tumors, the treatment and diagnosis of Chiari malformations and other congenital anomalies of the spine and brain, and the treatment of children with complex craniofacial anomalies. She is director of the Pediatric Brain Tumor Clinic at the University of Michigan and has worked to develop new therapies for brain tumors. She is the co-founder of Project Shunt at the University of Michigan. This is a program which provides care

to indigent children in Guatemala and has been an on-going yearly medical mission of neurosurgeons, anesthesiologists, neurosurgical residents, and nursing staff from the University of Michigan, under her direction, since 1998. The program has provided care to over 300 Guatemalan children. She is on the Physician's Advisory Committee of the Spina Bifida Association as well as the March of Dimes. She is a Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery with joint appointments in Plastic Surgery and Pediatrics, and is the first woman to chair an academic neurosurgical department in the United States. In 2007, she was named the first Julian T. Hoff Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Michigan. She is the author of over 85 peer reviewed publications and chapters, and is the editor of several books.

Karin is married to Scott Van Sweringen and they have two wonderful children, Paxton and Alexandria. Karin and Scott enjoy traveling, fishing, and architectural conservation.

Muraszko Q & A

What ranks as your 3 most important professional accomplishments and why?

1. **Getting into a neurosurgical residency** is perhaps one of my best professional accomplishments. At the time that I applied to neurosurgical residencies there were very few women. When I matriculated at Columbia, I was the first woman to have been accepted to the neu-

rosurgical residency. I was joined shortly thereafter by Emily Friedman. At the time, it was almost unheard of to get accepted to a neurosurgical residency as a woman but also as a woman with a disability. The combination of those features really made it a leap of faith for those individuals to view me as a possible candidate for a neurosurgical position. I will always be grateful to the folks at Columbia for taking that challenge on and for

training me so well.

2. Perhaps the second accomplishment was becoming a **Chair of a Department of Neurosurgery**. Obviously, becoming a chair is something which is still regarded as one of the penultimate accomplishments for an academic neurosurgeon. I suspect that, if you were to ask neurosurgical chairs across the country, you would find that that honor is

continued on page 3

• Our Luminaries - Muraszko

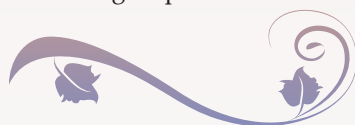
continued from page 2

diminishing on a daily basis. The days of the giants have long since gone and we are all facing much more scrutiny both from our home institutions as well as from the federal government. The number of regulations and hoops that we must jump through on a daily basis make the job much more about management and leadership than just about neurosurgery.

It is still, however, one of the greatest honors to be able to train the young neurosurgeons of the future. That, along with mentoring and helping develop a strong neurosurgical program, is one of the great joys of being a chair. In my own case, I am extraordinarily proud of the depth and breadth of neurosurgical expertise within my own department and with the quality of the residents that we now train. Seeing us expand and grow has been one of the areas that I take a tremendous amount of pride in. As is always the case, the creation of such a department is obviously not just under the guidance of one person but I work with a strong and dynamic group of colleagues who push me to be the best that I can be and who constantly surprise me for their integrity, intelligence and ability to work as a team.

3. One of the goals I have always had was to serve neurosurgery in some way. Having been a member of almost every neurosurgical organization, one of the areas that I thought could perhaps make the most contribution in organized

neurosurgery was the American Board of Neurological Surgeons (ABNS). I was extraordinarily honored that I was nominated by the Senior Society to become a **member of the ABNS** and have been extremely pleased to work with that esteemed group. I do believe that this is where the “pedal hits the metal.” The ABNS not only makes certain that the quality of training is the best that it can be, but also safeguards the greater public. I have always thought that one of the true obligations of a senior leader in neurosurgery was to make certain that the upcoming generation of neurosurgeons was safe, competent and maintained the highest ethical standards. I believe the ABNS guarantees that. Although we work very hard at the ABNS, I believe it is some of the most important work that can be done and I very much enjoy my colleagues in that group.



What ranks as your 3 most important personal accomplishments and why?

1. Perhaps one of my most important personal accomplishments is that I met and married **my husband** 15 years ago. At a time when I had decided that I was likely to become a monastic to neurosurgery, I went on a blind date arranged for by one of the OR nurses. Little did I know that would change my entire life. At that point in my life I really thought that neurosurgery was going to

be all-consuming and that my family would be my residents and colleagues and not that I would develop my own personal family. All that changed when I met Scott VanSweringen. As an architect, he could see past my own physical disability and has really made my life complete. I would never guess that I would find such happiness and contentment.

Perhaps his greatest attribute is that he does not worship the ground I walk on. He recognizes all of my foibles, is a constant companion and an able critic who really does allow me to bounce ideas off of him in a meaningful way. Despite coming from two very different careers, I find that his advice is always appreciated and absolutely necessary.

2. Similar to never believing that I would have met and married my wonderful husband, I certainly did not know that I would be able to also have a wonderful family. Having met my husband somewhat later in life, we decided to adopt **two wonderful children**. We did this knowing full well that we were undertaking a journey for which both of us thought we were prepared but likely were not. Paxton and Alexandria are the joy of my life. Though I am a somewhat older mother I find that they keep me young, they keep me constantly wanting to be better and consistently provide me with new insights as to what it really means to “see the world with fresh eyes.” They are the joy of my life and I pray every day that I will raise them with the same love and care that

I was given so that they too can see the world as a series of endless possibilities.

3. I have always known that I am a somewhat “different” individual when it comes to neurosurgery. I have often said that if you put a thousand people in a room, I would likely be the 999th person you would choose before thinking perhaps this is the neurosurgeon. By being unique and somewhat atypical, it has allowed me the freedom to do what I thought in my heart was best and not be constrained by tradition. It has allowed me to have some personal strength that I would not otherwise have achieved.

This strength was never more tested than when I became chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Michigan. I can still remember in the summer of 2004, when in a period of a little under a minute I received three very distinct emails. The first email was from my mother-in-law’s physician that she had widely metastatic cancer and was likely to survive only a very short period of time. The second email was from the Dean who indicated he was ready to talk with me about the position of being chair of the Department of Neurosurgery. The third was from my husband indicating that the adoption agency had found us Paxton and Alexandria and that we would now need to make arrangements to go to Russia sometime in the next several weeks. In that short period of one minute I realized my

continued on page 4

• Our Luminaries - Muraszko

continued from page 3

life had changed eternally. Little did I realize, however, how complicated that would really be. At the time I assumed the chair position in neurosurgery, it was in January of 2005 and my partner in pediatric neurosurgery had broken his arm and was still unable to operate. As a result, I was once again back to being the sole pediatric neurosurgeon at the University of Michigan. We had just arrived back from Russia with our two children and all of us were quite ill with a very virulent flu and both of my kids had Giardia and chicken pox. We arrived home on December 21 and I did twenty operations that first week, then taking the week off between Christmas and New Years to allow myself to "assemble my family." One of my children required hospitalization in the intensive care unit for several days because there was fear that his respiratory illness, which turned out to be RSV, could be varicella pneumonia. Fortunately, we were able to get through this although it was a very taxing and trying time. At the same point, my mother-in-law had just died and we were trying to deal with all of the grief and associated complexities from her death. Finally, my own mother had a significant cardiac event and was in the cardiac intensive care unit at the University of Michigan having arrived with an ejection fraction of ten percent and having left eventually with a normal ejection fraction and perhaps the fittest she had ever been. However, during the time when she was in the intensive care unit, it seemed as if there was an endless string of decisions to

be made and problems to be dealt with.

All of this occurred while I assumed the reigns of chair of the Department of Neurosurgery. I can remember the times in which it would seem that around every corner was some new problem. Despite all of this I felt tremendous support, not only from my colleagues in neurosurgery here at the University of Michigan but also from my family, and specifically from my husband. We had undertaken an entirely new journey by becoming parents, I had undertaken a complex journey of becoming chair, and then outside circumstances acted to complicate both of these events. In all, it was a stressful time but one in which I recognized I had gotten through the gauntlet and when I reached the other side I knew that I had a family, the support of my colleagues, the love of my husband, and a wonderful opportunity to help continue the strong tradition of neurosurgery at the University of Michigan. It was a trying time but one in which I learned a lot about myself as well as about my family and I am happy to report that we are still standing.



On a personal note, it is always important to find **an environment in which you feel you can prosper and grow** and certainly for me, Michigan has been that environment.

What advice would you give to women junior to you?

A woman who is junior to

me in neurosurgery faces a far different series of opportunities. No longer will she walk into a room of neurological surgeons and likely be the only woman present. I think having the ability to see within the crowd, faces that are similar to your own, provides a more inviting circumstance. I also believe that the face of neurosurgery has changed drastically. We are reaching a time in which the importance of neurosurgery cannot be underestimated. An aging population, improved knowledge of neuroscience, and an understanding that the quality of life is as important as quantity has really given neurosurgeons tremendous power. We are embarking upon a time of great growth in which translational research will be applied on a regular basis to daily problems in neurosurgery.

I would suggest to a woman entering into a career in neurosurgery to "**think outside the box**", to always challenge herself by maintaining the best of all surgical skills while still keeping a skeptical eye on new discoveries but also to participate in the discovery process. I truly believe that one of the most exciting places to be is in academic medicine but clearly I am prejudiced for that is the career I have chosen. I would also point out, however, that opportunities for women to participate in many aspects of neurosurgery from private practice to academics to industry and government have all expanded to a point now that the possibilities are dizzying.

Perhaps one of the most common questions I am asked is whether one can have balance in one's life. I certainly think that balance is both possible and necessary. I view the opportunities of a neuro-

surgical career as constantly expanding and ever-changing. With the onset of hospital-based practices and the development of multi-specialty group practices, as well as traditional academic practices, there are many opportunities to both have a family as well as an outstanding career. One of the most important things that any young neurosurgeon can do is **select individuals who you wish to become**. By working with the best, you become the best, no matter what type of practice you ascribe to. I would also recommend that you **consider more nontraditional roles if they meet your goals and desires**. There is no set pattern in neurosurgery for how one practices and therefore it is up to the individual to **develop and create the environment and the practice which best suits their needs, temperament and intellectual abilities**. Who knows, you could be the next CNN anchor.

On what topic would you like to receive advice on from women senior to yourself?

I have been blessed to be part of the original group of women who joined and created Women in Neurosurgery. WINS has been a tremendous asset for me in that it has helped create a network of friends in neurosurgery that I rely on on a regular basis. There are particularly three women with whom I meet on a regular basis at all of our national meetings. They have become my soul mates, my friends, my counselors, and the individuals for whom I receive advice on a regular basis. We have learned over the years to be honest with each other, that honesty includes discussions about our families,

continued on page 5

• Our Luminaries - Muraszko

continued from page 4

the strains and stresses that we experience within our own careers, and no topic is barred from discussion. I have always appreciated the fact that their honesty allows me to sometimes see the things in myself that I find most difficult to assess. These are dynamic senior women in neurosurgery who provide me great counsel as well as strong support. I would encourage every individual facing the stresses that are automatic in such a career to **find such advisors and counselors**. You don't just want a cheerleader, what you want is someone who can tell you the harsh truth even if it

is difficult. My **GOGN (Good Old Girls Network)** are some of my closest and greatest friends. I appreciate their counsel and their wisdom but most importantly, I appreciate their honesty.

In looking for advice from senior women, I think it is always important to understand how one creates balance. Oftentimes success seems to be a path which is one-dimensional. It is not and I believe senior women can offer us advice about that balance. Whether it is maintaining one's weight or writing a book or creating a department, understanding that balance is a necessary part of life is important to all of us.

TO RENEW OR BECOME A MEMBER OF WINS,
go to www.my-WINS.org
(use your AANS login information)
for help obtaining a password,
please contact
Ashley Hamm at aeh@aans.org.

Special thanks to Ms. Chris Philips.

*Her tireless support
of WINS is invaluable!*



JOIN US FOR THE
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Our Luminaries



**Deborah L. Benzil,
MD, FACS**

**Chair CSNS,
Co-Founder- WINS**

Dr. Deborah L. Benzil Biography

Deborah L. Benzil, MD, FACS, FAANS is proud to be a practicing neurosurgeon and a leader in organized neurosurgery; a wife and mother, as well as an avid reader, amateur chef, and world traveler. Growing up in rural Maryland, she never dreamed this is where her life would lead as she attended a large school where less than 20% of the students went on to further education and it was far more advantageous to be a cheerleader than a female athlete or even worse, a woman honor student. In 1977, she left her small town to attend Brown University where she found great friendship and intellectual stimulation. With a major in Health and Society, Deborah graduated with honors, Phi Beta Kappa in 1981. Her focus during her undergraduate studies was on women's health issues and she entered medical school at the University of Maryland with the intention of continuing that area of study. However, during her very first clinical rotation, she was exposed to neurosurgery

and was instantly hooked! Following her three weeks on the neurosurgical service, she knew this was the only specialty she would ever want to pursue.

Upon graduation from medical school, Deborah began a 2-year Visiting Fellowship in Surgical Neurology at the National Institutes of Health, NINCDs studying signal transduction pathways in astrocytomas. Here she had her introduction to the emerging field of molecular biology: oncogenes, growth factors, and signal transduction. As her Fellowship neared completion, a neurosurgical residency finally became a reality when a position at Brown University was offered and accepted. The long journey as a neurosurgeon had finally begun. Of equal importance, she met Paul Finch, a Fogarty Fellow working at the NCI, whom she would marry in 1988.

At Brown University/Rhode Island Hospital, Deborah completed first a general surgery internship and then 6 years of neurosurgery. During that time,

she was awarded the Anthony Greto Fellowship from the American Brain Tumor Association for two years of research support, continuing her work in astrocytomas.

Since completion of residency, Dr. Benzil has lived and worked in Westchester County, just outside of New York City. She was originally full-time faculty at NY Medical College and now is the sole neurosurgeon for a large multi-specialty group. She holds clinical appointments at both NY Medical College and Columbia University.

Throughout her neurosurgical career, Dr. Benzil has been extremely active in organized neurosurgery. She was founding member and first president of WINS, has served in many leadership positions within both the AANS and the CSNS, currently serving as chair.

She is also a wife of nearly 25 years, mother to Dina Benzil (21) and Daniel Finch (20) who have clearly inherited her love for travel, books, hiking, food and wine.

Benzil Q & A

What ranks as your 3 most important professional accomplishments and why?

1. Being elected **Chair of the CSNS** is likely my most important professional accomplishment. Despite the increasing number of women neurosurgeons, there is still a remarkable paucity of women that have reached positions of national leadership. As I reviewed in my Chair's address during my first CSNS meeting, only one other woman has been head of a national organization (Carole Miller, President

NSA) and just 4 women have chaired Joint Sections (Carole Miller-Spine, Joan Venes and Tina Duhaime-Pediatrics, and Shelly Timmons-Neurotrauma). I know that being in such a visible position will help other women neurosurgeons in many ways, it is a great position from which to "sponsor" talented women and help them advance in their careers. I also greatly value the CSNS because it is so diverse and it is a representational organization whose work really does make a difference to every practicing neurosurgeon-academic and private, small and large group practice, male and female.

2. Undoubtedly (though I didn't

realize it at the time), being a **founding member and first president of WINS** was another critical important professional accomplishment. I have to admit, my "election" as president really amounted to me volunteering to steer the fledgling group through our first meeting and to solicit interest from every woman we could identify. While I know my role was small (current WINS presidents have so much more responsibility that I could have imagined then), launching WINS was beneficial to me and all of neurosurgery in many ways. Clearly in 1989, there were

continued on page 7



• Our Luminaries - Benzil

continued from page 6

finally just enough women to finally think about collecting ourselves together—primarily to mentor and support each other. Perhaps it is not surprising that overwhelmingly, the founding and early members of WINS have gone on to accomplish many of the important “FIRSTS” for women neurosurgeons. Ultimately, the work would be recognized by the leaders within neurosurgery become an engine for change, for all of neurosurgery. Finally, the personal connections I made during those early years served as my crucial support system for navigating the early years of my career which were extremely challenging. I wouldn’t have survived without this.

- For 5 years, our neuro-oncology group sponsored a program (Hats Off) honoring our brain tumor patients and their families - much like a survivor day for other cancers though all too often only the families were represented. Each year, the organizing committee selected an individual to receive an award for outstanding contribution to making the lives of our patients and their families better. I was deeply honored and touched that one year, to my surprise, the committee gave me the **“Hats Off Award”** in addition to the individual we had officially agreed to honor. To be recognized by fellow physicians, nurses, program administrators and patients reminded me of why I love neurosurgery and can come to work each day.
- While I was asked to keep to 3 responses, I have to add that **editing and publishing *Heart of a Lion, Hands of a Woman: What Women Neurosurgeons Do*** was enormously rewarding. We set out to use creativity to honor WINS 20th anniversary and I was over-

whelmed with the enthusiasm from many continents with creativity that ranged from writing to photography to poetry to visual arts. I still feel the compilation says much about all women who pioneer in a non-traditional career. I can still laugh and cry when I read many of the pieces and beam with joy when I look at the spectacular art. I encourage each and every neurosurgeon to get a copy!

What ranks as your 3 most important personal accomplishments and why?

- When I decided **to become a neurosurgeon**, there was just that one love in my life and it felt like it was all the love I would ever need. Then I met my husband and realized I had enough to share between my career and him. We have been together more than 25 years and every day I wake up thrilled he is a big part of my life. He has been an unending source of support but also serves as my strongest and most honest critic. He is also the father of our two wonderful children: Dina Benzil (21) and Daniel Finch (20) who have also brought great joy and happiness to my life. Parenting the late teenage years are tough, certainly much harder than being a neurosurgeon but seeing your children emerge into young adults is (almost) worth the struggle.
- Hiking the Inca trail to Machu Pichu** stands as another of my proudest personal accomplishments. I am not a natural hiker but have come to love the great outdoors and the beauty and peace that can be found by getting away from the crowds in places like Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the Andes. Still, the altitudes required on the Inca Trail combined with the exceedingly steep terrain make this

a challenging week for most. The rest of my family are great hikers so I always have the further challenge of not being able to keep up with their pace and stamina. But I was determined and when I got up over 14,000 feet I was exhausted from the climb but extremely gratified. The next day when we first glimpsed the spectacular ruins from the Sun Gate, I knew the challenge had been worthwhile.

- Being a neurosurgeon, especially one with a strong interest in neuro-oncology, gives us special insight into the whole process of grief, death and dying. As such, I have often found myself in the position of strongly influencing or helping friends and family during these emotional times. It is common I get a call from someone who asks me how to handle a visit to a friend during their final days or to a family member who is dealing with a devastating medical problem in a love one. I share freely what my own patients have taught me about what “works” and what doesn’t. **I also have been known to move mountains** to assure a visit to a long-lost family member or friend, a phone call or similar. I believe that my willingness to broach these difficult issues has been invaluable and has really helped many people find some peace during difficult times.
- Once again I feel compelled to add a fourth very personal accomplishment of which I am really proud. Having celebrated my 50th birthday I made a serious **commitment to my own health and well being**. During the subsequent two years, I have worked extremely hard to return to my age twenty weight and I have succeeded! I am loving how comfortable my OR scrubs feel and how nice I feel

in my new clothes. Too many physicians give great advice to their patients but ignore their own well-being. I can personally attest to how much better my own back and neck feel in my new, fit physique.

What advice would you give to women junior to you?

I could write a book on this so perhaps instead I will keep it really simple. **Make sure that the choices you make are active and not passive**. It is too easy to let your life slip by, fall into patterns that don’t really work. Take charge, make your life what you really want it to be, and don’t be afraid of change.

On what topic would you like to receive advice on from women senior to yourself?

I have been the great beneficiary of strong support and mentoring from many women throughout my years in neurosurgery and have now reached a point where there are few women really senior to me (that aren’t retired!). I doubt this is true for most women neurosurgeons and I would strongly encourage all women to ensure you have a strong network of WOMEN (in addition to men) mentors and colleagues with whom you can share honestly all the good, the bad and the ugly. We are still fairly isolated - most of us work in an environment where we are the only woman or one of just a small number. Creating a community may mean connecting with other surgical specialists or with women neurosurgeons across the country. I have encouraged WINS to begin a mentoring program directed at women in the post-residency stage of career development. I think this is an overlooked need that needs to be met. Like many of WINS initiatives, I bet the success of this would then spread to all of neurosurgery!

Our Luminaries



**Jamie Ullman,
MD, FACS**

Associate Professor,
Department of
Neurosurgery, Mount
Sinai School of Medicine;
and Director, Department
of Neurosurgery,
Elmhurst Hospital Center



Dr. Jamie Ullman Biography

Jamie S. Ullman, MD, FACS, is Board Certified in Neurological Surgery; Associate Professor, Department of Neurosurgery, Mount Sinai School of Medicine; and Director, Department of Neurosurgery, Elmhurst Hospital Center. Elmhurst Hospital is a Level 1 trauma hospital and the primary teaching affiliate of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Her clinical interests are traumatic brain injury treatment, critical care, and public health issues regarding pedestrian injury. In addition, she practices as a general neurosurgeon with interest in the surgical management of brain tumors, degenerative and traumatic spine disease, trigeminal neuralgia, and normal

pressure hydrocephalus.

A native of New York, Dr. Ullman was raised in New Jersey and attended Rutgers University, inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society, and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors in Zoology. She then attended the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Post-graduate training then took her back to New York where she completed her neurosurgery residency at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine with fellowship training in neurotrauma at the University of Maryland, Shock Trauma Center, and neurosurgery critical care at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

She began her involvement with Women In Neurosurgery at the suggestion and influence of past-president, Isabelle Germano, in 2003, and served as WINS President from 2006-2007. During her tenure as WINS President, Dr. Ullman began to revise the organizational bylaws and structure, developed a course for strategic planning, and conducted an important member-needs survey.

Jamie Ullman is a member of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), the latter of which she serves on the Executive Committee. Dr. Ullman is currently the Secretary/Treasurer of the AANS/CNS.

Ullman Q & A

What ranks as your 3 most important professional accomplishments and why?

1. **Becoming a faculty member at a major New York medical school.**

For many years growing up, I had known that I was going to be a doctor. As I advanced through college, I began to have aspirations to become a teacher as well, so it was natural to combine the professions. I had always desired to receive training in New York City and achieved that goal in when I entered Mount Sinai as a surgery intern and, then, was chosen by the legendary Leonard Malis to continue in neurosurgery. Through rigorous residency training and dedication to the hospital that I had called home for seven years I strongly desired to continue on as faculty. Thanks to the support of my chairman and mentor, Dr. Kalmon Post, I have realized

this dream and have been involved in our Neurosurgery residency training program for the past 15 years. There is significant satisfaction when I see a resident develop from demonstrating rudimentary knowledge and skill to becoming three-dimensional neurosurgery “thinkers”, ready to enter the workforce, fully trained. If our residents eventually accomplish wonderful things for their patients and communities, then the efforts that went into their training will have been truly worth it.

2. **Getting involved in organized Neurosurgery.**

I guess I have always volunteered for something, as my mother will attest to: for example, filling in last minute for the sick child who was supposed to give a speech during our 4th-grade class’ dedication of a Japanese Cherry tree to the elementary school’s grounds. So it is not a surprise that I would ultimately get involved in organizations, such as WINS and the AANS. My full-fledged CNS involvement has been

relatively recent, but when I started on the Executive Committee, I was particularly struck by the dedication and enthusiasm of every individual sitting around the table. This enthusiasm has been truly infectious. It is important to volunteer time to our own professional organizations. These organizations exist to promote continuing education, provide advocacy for social and economic issues that are important to us, and help neurosurgeons around the country and world to connect, share ideas, and improve each other’s professionalism and practice.

3. **Involvement in Neurotrauma activities on the local, state, and national level.**

As mentioned above, I have been active in neurotrauma at various geographical levels. My particular interest at this time is the significant local problem of pedestrian injury occurring in the catchment area of Elmhurst Hospital. We have hosted two, and soon to be a third, city-wide pedestrian summits

continued on page 9

• Our Luminaries - Ullman

continued from page 8

on the problem and are conducting epidemiological research.

What ranks as your 3 most important personal accomplishments and why?

1. **Great husband and child.** I am fortunate to have a wonderful, supportive husband, Mark, and a beautiful 4-year old, Sara. Sara is absolutely wonderful. Maybe she will one day become a physician, perhaps a neurosurgeon? What ever path she chooses, she will always have my full support and love.
2. **Singing and performing.** I love the performing arts and love to act and sing. I began to take singing lessons around

16 years ago and was able to perform in organized cabaret classes and recitals and a few plays/musicals. I even did a recording session! Of course I paid for it myself, but, hey, you need to create your own opportunities and not stand around waiting for someone to discover you! It may not be the Metropolitan Opera, but performing is fun no matter where, when, and how. It also can build character, if you can believe that.

3. **Volunteerism.** Almost an extension of the above-mentioned professional version, but in the personal realm, whether it is with one's house of worship, as a candy striper in a hospital, or in a camp for special-needs

children, giving something of yourself to your community is highly rewarding.

What advice would you give to women junior to you?

Go that extra step. Whether it be for your patients, an organization that you belong to, a department or hospital, it always helps to go that extra step to improve care, to improve yourself, or to alleviate concern. You will be very glad that you did.

On what topic would you like to receive advice on from women senior to yourself?

Effective leadership styles and techniques, and ways to continually improve professionally and personally.

The Annual WINS Breakfast Reception



The Annual WINS Breakfast Reception was held April 13, 2011 at the AANS meeting in Colorado. Dr. Kristen Iversen, the 2011 Eisenhardt Lecturer attended and presented details of her work. Dr. Iversen is the author of three books, most recently Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth. Among her accomplishments, Dr. Iversen is the Director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at The University of Memphis and is Editor-in-Chief of *The Pinch*, an award-winning literary journal of prose, poetry, art, and photography.

The Annual Reception at the CNS meeting in Washington, DC

The Annual Reception at the CNS meeting in Washington, DC featured honored guest Ms. Candy Crowley. In addition to being the mother of a Neurosurgeon, Ms. Crowley is CNN's award-winning chief political correspondent and anchor of State of the Union with Candy Crowley, a political hour of newsmaker interviews and analysis of the week's most important issues. Crowley took the reins of State of the Union in February 2010. In her role as chief political correspondent, Crowley covers a broad range of stories, including presidential, congressional and gubernatorial races and major legislative developments on Capitol Hill.

Ms. Crowley captivated the audience with her thoughts, experiences and advice. In addition, she graciously stayed, to meet all attendees, sharing her valuable time. Noteworthy was the special attention given to Dr. Ruth Jakoby, the first woman to receive Board Certification in Neurosurgery in the United States. WINS remain appreciative of her generosity.



Ms. Candy Crowley, Dr. Merylee Werthan and Dr. Ruth Jakoby at the CNS WINS Reception, October 4, 2011

Dr. Ruth Jakoby, Dr. Shelly Timmons and Dr. Julie Pilitsis at the CNS WINS Reception, October 4, 2011

Progress Report

Percentage of Female Neurosurgery Residents in the US by year:
 In 2011 there were approximately 19.6% female residents in training across the United States.
 We congratulate you on your accomplishments and welcome you to the ranks of WINS.

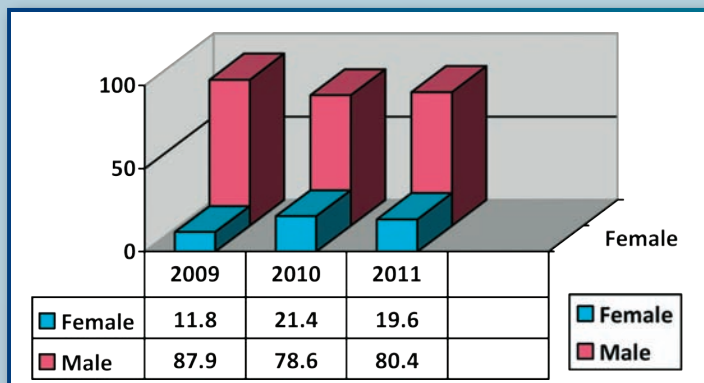


Figure 1- % Female Residents per Years- 2009, 2010 & 2011

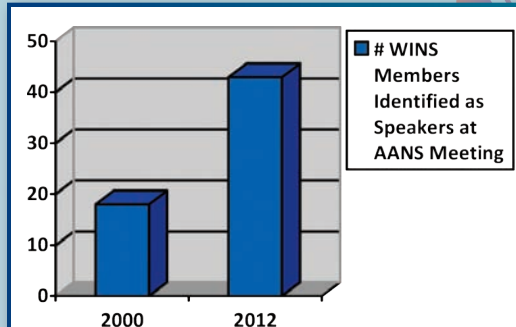
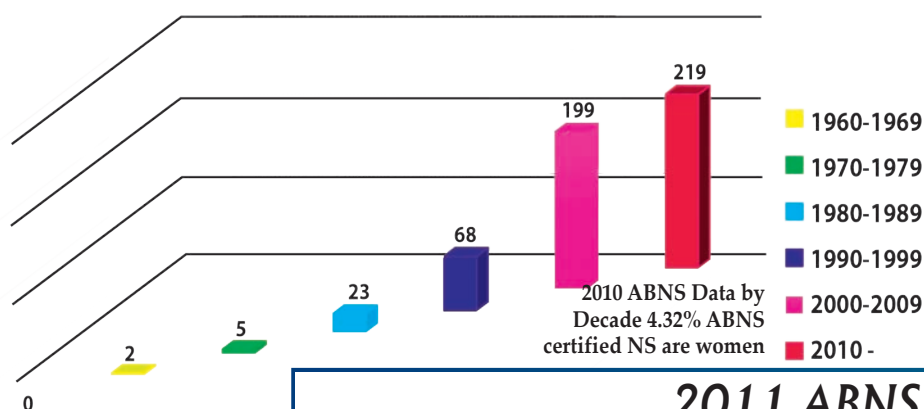


Figure 2 - # WINS members identified as Speakers at the Annual AANS Meetings; 139% increase from 2000.

Total Number of ABNS-Certified Female Neurosurgeons by Decade



2011 ABNS Data

Board Certification is a tremendous accomplishment, both professional and personal.
 We celebrate those who have successfully achieved this milestone.

CONGRATULATIONS!

ABNS Year Cert	WINS Member	Name
2010	Active	Ruth E. Bristol, MD, FAANS
2010	Active	Ania G. Pollack, MD, FAANS
2010	Active	Shirley I. Stiver, MD, PhD, FAANS
2010	Active	Elizabeth C. Tyler-Kabara, MD, PhD, FAANS
2010	Lifetime	Uzma Samadani, MD, PhD, FAANS
2010		Joanna R. Swartzbaugh, MD
2010		Nirit Weiss, MD, FAANS
2011	Active	Anje Kim, MD, FAANS
2011		Rebekah Crump Austin, MD, FAANS
2011		Erica F. Bisson, MD, FAANS
2011		Claudia Martin, MD
2011		Wendy Jennifer Spangler-Morrison, MD, FAANS
2011		Amanda L. Yaun, MD
2011	Active	Julie Pilitsis, MD, PhD
2011		Rose Du, MD
2011		Virany Huynh Hillard, MD
2011		Sheila Madigan Smitherman, MD
2011		Mei Yim Wong, MD

Meet the Officers



Odette A. Harris, MD, MPH
President

Dr. Harris received her medical degree and completed residency training at Stanford University, and received an MPH from the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently Associate Professor of Neurosurgery at Stanford University. She is the Director of Brain Injury at Stanford University Medical Center, the Associate Chief of Staff for Polytrauma and Director of the Defense Veterans Brain Injury Center at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. She is also a Visiting Consultant of Neurosurgery for the department of Surgery at the University Hospital of the West Indies. Her research focuses on the epidemiology and outcomes of traumatic brain injury.



Eve Tsai MD, PhD
President-Elect

Dr. Eve Tsai obtained her medical degree and completed her residency in neurosurgery at the University of Toronto. During her residency, she completed a PhD at the University of Toronto. Dr. Tsai then obtained subspecialty fellowship training in spine surgery at the Cleveland Clinic. She has won numerous awards, including the Top 40 under 40 Award and the Young Clinician Investigator Award from the American Association of Neurological Surgeons.

Dr. Tsai returned to Canada in 2006 and joined The Ottawa Hospital, the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa. Her main surgical interests will focus on all types of spine and spinal cord diseases such as spinal cord injury, spinal cord and spine tumors, syringomyelia, and myelopathy. Her research focuses on spinal cord repair strategies, axonal regeneration, MRI imaging of spinal cord tracts in humans and animals, and clinical outcomes after spine surgery. She is currently Assistant Professor, University of Ottawa and Staff Neurosurgeon, The Ottawa Hospital



Julie G. Pilitsis MD, PhD
Secretary-Treasurer

Julie G. Pilitsis MD, PhD graduated from Albany Medical College, Albany, New York. She completed her residency at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. During that time, she also obtained a PhD in neurophysiology and became active in both basic science and translational research. This work resulted in a number of peer-reviewed journal articles, presentations, and book chapters. Her research in facial pain resulted in receipt of a national award by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons/ Congress of Neurological Surgeons. She went on to complete a fellowship in Functional Neurosurgery at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, IL, focusing in the neurosurgical treatment of movement disorders. She served as director of functional neurosurgery at UMass Memorial Medical Center. She has recently returned to her alma mater Albany Medical College, joining the division of neurosurgery as an associate professor. She specializes in Functional Neurosurgery, including deep brain stimulation (DBS) and stimulation for chronic pain. Her clinical interests include the effects of DBS on mood and neurocognition in movement disorders as well as the use of deep brain stimulation in depression and OCD. Her research interests include emerging applications for DBS, DBS device/process improvement and the pathophysiology of Parkinson's Disease.



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Women in Neurosurgery
5550 Meadowbrook Drive
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008



WINS MISSION

To educate, inspire, and encourage women neurosurgeons to realize their professional and personal goals, and to serve neurosurgery in addressing the issues inherent to training and maintaining a diverse and balanced workforce.

2012 EISENHARDT LECTURER

Dr. Cynthia Breazeal

Wednesday April 18, 2012 at the
80th AANS Annual Meeting Miami, FL



Past Eisenhardt Lecturers:

Sally Ride, PhD

American Astronaut - 2007

Marcia Angell, MD

Editor, New England Journal of Medicine - 2008

Geraldine Brooks

Pulitzer Prize winning author of *People of the Book*, *Nine Parts of Desire*, *March*, and others - 2009

Mary Sue Coleman, PhD

President of University of Michigan - 2010

Kristen Iversen

Author: *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth* - 2011

Cynthia Breazeal, ScD

Associate Professor of Media Arts and Sciences at MIT, where she is the director of the Personal Robots Group (formerly the Robotic Life Group) at the MIT Media Laboratory - 2012

WINS is proud to announce our speaker for the 2012 Louise Eisenhardt Breakfast, to be held Wednesday, April 18, 2012.

Dr. Cynthia Breazeal, ScD, is the Associate Professor of Media

Arts and Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where she has pioneered the field of social robotics and Human-Robot Interaction. Her robotic development "Kismet" is internationally recognized as one of the best-known robots to explore social and emotional aspects of human-robot interaction. In 2008, Dr. Breazeal was the recipient of TIME Magazine's 50 Best Inventions and the Gilbreth Lectures Award from the National Academy of Engineering. She is the author of the book "Designing Social Robots," and has published more than 100 peer-reviewed articles in journals on the topics of autonomous robotics and artificial intelligence. Her recent work investigates the impact of social robots on assisting people of all ages to achieve personal goals that contribute to quality of life in areas such as physical performance, learning and education, health, and family communication.