

*Women in Neurosurgery*  
**Winter 2025 Newsletter**



# Chair's Message

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I hope that you've all enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and had some time to rest and reflect. In this newsletter, I hope we give you further opportunity to reflect on where you are in your Neurosurgical career journey and how far you've come.

As a society, we have progressed in our membership and in our goals to increase women's representation and diversity in Neurosurgery. With this increase in representation comes new and fresh perspectives, some of which you will find featured in the current newsletter. It is exciting to see that, at different stages of their Neurosurgical careers, members of this group are winning awards and mentoring one another. As there is no single way to achieve a meaningful Neurosurgical career, and as the definition of "success" can vary by person and career stage, multiple perspectives and more voices help us all. Thus, I'm thankful to those who have shared their journeys with us in this newsletter, and I'm very grateful to the authors for their work in keeping us all connected and grounded as we share experiences.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the mission of WINS. It was a privilege to see so many of you at CNS. There are multiple upcoming live and virtual WINS events for you to check out, so hopefully we all see each other again soon!

Sincerely,

**Laura Snyder, MD**

Chair, AANS/CNS Joint Section of Women in Neurosurgery  
Professor of Neurosurgery  
Barrow Neurological Institute, Phoenix, AZ



# Community Updates

## Attendings

### WINS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



**President:**  
Laura Snyder, MD  
Barrow Neurological  
Institute, Phoenix, AZ



**President-elect:**  
Kimberly Price  
Kicielinski, MD  
Medical University of  
South Carolina,  
Charleston, SC



**Secretary:**  
Rupa Juthani, MD  
Neurosurgeons of New  
Jersey, NYU Langone,  
New York, NY



**Secretary:**  
Rushna P. Ali, MD  
Mayo Clinic,  
Rochester, MN



**Member-at-Large:**  
Corinna Zygourakis, MD  
Stanford Medicine,  
Palo Alto, CA



**Member-at-Large:**  
Angela M. Richardson,  
MD, PhD  
Indiana University,  
Indianapolis, IN

### Spotlight on



### A Celebration of Success



**Congratulations to Dr. Martina Stippler for her selection as the first woman to serve as the 2025-2026 CNS President!**



**Congratulations to Dr. Odette Harris for being awarded the WINS Trailblazer Award!**



**Congratulations to Dr. Marjorie Wang for being awarded the CNS Educator of the Year!**



**Congratulations to Dr. Macarena de la Fuente for being awarded the Women in Neuro-Oncology Mid-Career Exemplary Physician Award!**

# Community Updates

## Fellows - Residents

### Trainee Tuesday



#### Dr. Brittany Owusu-Adjei

Dr. Brittany Owusu-Adjei is a PGY-6 at University of Massachusetts. Her primary clinical interest is neurosurgical oncology, and her research contributions are centered on using a novel delivery platform to identify glioblastoma and meningioma targets. She encourages WINS members to work hard and not let race, gender, financial status, or cultural background limit your potential!

### Congratulations Corner

- Congratulations to Dr. Julia Pazniokas for receiving the Duke Samson Award at CNS 2025!
- Congratulations to Dr. Briana Prager and Dr. Casey Jarvis for receiving the Karp Fellowship!

### Resident Initiatives

The WINS Mentorship Program continues to run strong! Medical students gain valuable guidance and a glimpse of what life is like on the other side from their resident/fellow pairing.

Research productivity does not stop after medical school graduation! Our WINS Resident Committee-arranged panel with Drs. Sonia Ajmera, Rui Feng, Ellina Hattar, and Megan Still shared their insights into how to maintain productivity throughout the busy years of residency!

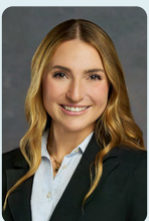


#### Dr. Megan Bauman, PGY-1

Washington University in St. Louis

"It has been incredibly rewarding to mentor 3 amazing medical students and their journeys in neurosurgery. As a new PGY-1 and someone who is not too far removed from being a medical student, it has been powerful to be able to share my experiences (and especially what I have learned from them) and pass that information to my mentees in hopes of contributing to their successes!"

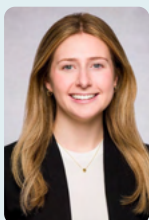
### What the Mentorship Program mentees are saying:



#### Taylor Niznik, M4

University of Oklahoma College of Medicine

"Since the application process is always changing, having our mentor, Megan, advise us and share her recent experience has been very helpful! It's also been great to have another MS4, Gigi, in the group while going through the process. She brings insight from her own program and mentors and is a friendly face along the way!"



#### Gigi Grigorian, M4

Emory University School of Medicine

"It has been so helpful to have the near-peer perspective of our resident mentor, Megan, this year as I navigate the residency application process and think about my interests and goals for my training. I've also really enjoyed getting to know the other medical students in my mentorship group, and it's been valuable to have their perspectives as well. It has been especially fun to run into Taylor at interviews this year!"



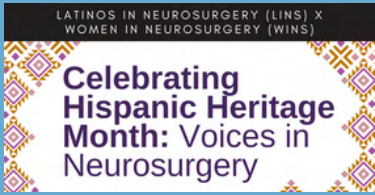
Our WINS Residents continue to pay it forward with engaging discussions with motivated medical students in monthly "Scrubbed Out" virtual chats. Curious attendees can have their questions answered in a low-stress, honest environment!

# Community Updates

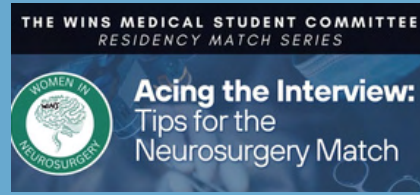
## Medical Students

### Medical Student Initiatives

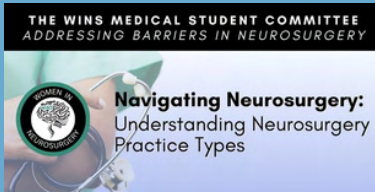
Our WINS Medical Student Committee spearheaded several virtual events this past season that emphasized diversity, future specialty interests, and residency prep!



On October 6<sup>th</sup>, we held “Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month: Voices in Neurosurgery” with Drs. Lucia Zamorano and Analiz Rodriguez who shared their journeys and how identity shaped their career path.



“Acing the Interview: Tips for the Neurosurgery Match” was held on October 21st with Dr. Quinsey, and over 100 attendees learned how to tackle difficult residency interview questions.



“Navigating Neurosurgery: Understanding Neurosurgery Practice Types” was held on November 12th with Drs. Aurora Cruz, Justine Pearl, and Uzma Samadani. Each described their decision to their career path for curious students.



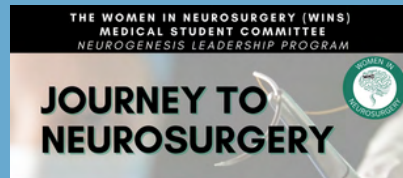
“WINS MSC: Mastering VSLO: Strategies for a Successful Neurosurgery Sub-Internship” was held on November 21st with the MSC members Jade Basem, Kathleen Botterbush, and Allie Heineman. They shared how to prepare for the upcoming sub-internship applications.

### Neurogenesis Leadership Program

Our 3-month peer-to-peer Neurogenesis Leadership Program offered 3 medical students without home programs the opportunity to gain leadership, neurosurgical exposure, & hands-on skills to prepare for the road ahead. With our collaborating institutions, they were able to hold valuable virtual events for their fellow peers in medical school.



On November 11<sup>th</sup>, in collaboration with the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and as part of our Neurogenesis Leadership Program, we held a virtual panel of DO neurosurgery residents and a suture workshop.



On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, our “Journey to Neurosurgery” event was led by Drs. Sonia Eden, Kimberly B. Hoang, and Nnenna Mbabuikwe in collaboration with Morehouse School of Medicine.



On December 17<sup>th</sup>, WINS in collaboration with Wayne State University School of Medicine, held engaging presentations, a panel discussion with Dr. Erik Larson of Kootenai Health, and an interactive suture workshop.



Clairice Pearce, MS3  
WINS MSC Newsletter Coordinator

Reyna Escalante, OMS3  
WINS MSC Newsletter Editor

Thanks to all who participated!

# WINS Legacy Interview

*Dr. Jamie Allman*

Professor, Department of Neurosurgery, Zucker School of Medicine (Hofstra/Northwell)  
Director of Neurotrauma and Quality Improvement, Northwell Health Neurosurgery  
Director of Quality Improvement, Northwell Neurosurgery Service Line

## **How would you describe your journey in neurosurgery?**

My journey has been interesting, wonderful, and challenging. It has been quite a ride! But I don't see myself doing anything differently in all that I've done. I was very fortunate with my training. I was a resident at Mount Sinai, and that institution had a rich history of admitting and training women when I started. My residency experience was great, and I had no concerns about my educational environment during residency. There were great people and great mentors. I loved it so much I stayed on as faculty. These days, I address emergency conditions in my practice and through research. I have helped standardize management of TBI through guideline approaches; I helped develop the Guidelines for the Management of Severe Traumatic Brain Injury, 3rd and 4th editions, an evidence-based review that provides guidelines and recommendations for people to follow based on important physiological principles. We've seen a dramatic decline in poor outcomes, and we owe this to our thoughtful and systematic approach to management. And this is not neurosurgery in isolation! We have worked to educate those in trauma surgery, general surgery, the neurointerventionalists... There are no magic bullets in getting people back to where they used to be before their injury!



## **Throughout the course of your career, what are some of the accomplishments you are most proud of?**

Graduating from neurosurgery residency and gaining full professorship at an academic institution was always my goal, so I am proud I was able to achieve that. I also have a lot of pride in my accomplishments within organized neurosurgery, like in WINS. I was the first woman to be an officer (Vice President) in the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), and I am currently on the Board of Directors of the American Board of Neurological Surgeons. I also am proud of my non-career-wise accomplishments: I have a beautiful daughter who is now in college.

## **As a trailblazing woman in neurosurgery, what are some of the challenges you faced? How did you overcome them?**

The one thing I have noticed that is challenging for women is achieving higher levels of leadership in academic institutions and within organized neurosurgery. I'm so glad to see the CNS has a woman as president! It is incumbent on women to facilitate women advancing in our specialty. I think raising a family and child is also challenging. A lot of women feel this extra responsibility. I'm very fortunate to have had a husband who is on more equal footing with me. I'm not sure if I would have done it if the situation would have been different. I can't pretend like achieving a sense of balance is easy as a woman in neurosurgery. I doubt anyone can actually achieve that balance! Overcoming this is finding the right partners and doing the best you can to create a situation that is as balanced as possible. If you want it, you try to make it work out. That effort may have to be a little extra than our male counterparts.

### **What does the “Spirit of WINS” mean to you? How have you embodied that throughout your career?**

What WINS has created is a community where you can reach out and speak to people who share similar experiences. You can commiserate, get advice, bounce ideas off of each other. That is what WINS has meant to me over so many years. Do we really need a separate organization for women in neurosurgery? Emphatically, yes. Women are a minority in the profession and we must mutually support each other. Some of the best friends I have made over the past several years have been made through WINS. The organization is evolving to a greater purpose. It’s evolving in an environment where there are counter forces in these communities. We have to double down on what our communities mean to us and how it helps support us. It provides benefits by providing community.

### **What are your aspirations for the future of WINS and the field of neurosurgery as a whole?**

My aspiration is for WINS to persist as a wonderful community of like-minded individuals with shared experiences. But I do hope that it will be rendered moot in the future, whenever that will be. We have 20% of residents that are female, but once they graduate they get diluted into a larger pool. It will be a long time before we achieve an equal split between men and women in the profession. I hope there will be a future where WINS will not be needed anymore or it can break down into more specific interest groups and communities that serve everybody. Until then, I think WINS needs to continue to provide for its members and for neurosurgery.

### **What words of wisdom would you like to share with WINS members?**

The words of wisdom I have are for those coming up in the ranks or aspiring to become neurosurgeons: continue to be yourself. Don’t let neurosurgery change who you are. Be true to yourself, but at same time, be true to your dreams. We want everyone to be happy with their profession; it should not to the exclusion of everything else. We are full human beings, and we need to realize that. Follow your dreams.

### **What is your most cherished WINS memory?**

One of my favorite memories was coming across one of the WINS presidents who preceded me [Dr. Todor]. I spoke with her about taking over after the unexpected passing of Sherry Apple. She had held just an incredible reception! I had congratulated her and acknowledged her taking on the role, and I was struck by her resilience and skill in managing it the way she did. It just highlighted the nature of what we women can bring to the table. That interaction stands out in my mind as exemplary of the spirit of WINS. We are supporting each other and facing challenges and overcoming them with the help of other people and the support of our community.



**Dr. Ullman, thank you for sharing your thoughtful insights!**

# CNS 2025 in Review

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We started off CNS bright and early on Monday, October 13th, with the WINS/LGBTQ+ Breakfast Seminar. Our panelists, Dr. Jennifer Kim, Dr. Nina Yoh, Dr. Hai Sun, Dr. Ruth Bristol, Dr. Azadeh Farin, Dr. Lindsey Ross, and medical student Sanjeev Herr, shared how they carved their own path to leadership within neurosurgery, whether that was through making investments in focused research or championing diversity through representation. They reminded us that while taking initiative can be intimidating, doing so can pave the way for huge opportunities and can inspire others to do the same.



In the afternoon, we held our Women in Neurosurgery Committee Meeting, where we reflected on our membership growth over the past year, highlighted the successful initiatives led by our committees, and discussed our goals moving forward. Thank you to everyone who attended and continues to support our efforts.

# CNS 2025 in Review

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Through our Mentorship in a Minute Program, medical students were also able to gain guidance and inspiration from resident mentors at the Congress. We love to see our residents serving the next generation of neurosurgeons. We had a total of 42 participants this meeting!



We concluded the evening with the WINS CNS Reception, where Dr. Snyder engaged with the Award-winning, former Chief White House Correspondent and Founder of “News Not Noise,” Jessica Yellin. She shared her experiences in building her own virtual news platform and described how she aimed to maintain integrity when providing news coverage. She encouraged future neurosurgeons to follow their curiosity, to get “thick skin” when things are not going well, and to have humility when they are in the wrong. “There are delicate ways to have difficult conversations,” she said. “You need to follow your humanity. Take off your shoes, and walk in the grass - it grounds you.”



Scan this QR code to visit the WINS LinkTree and view the WINS website, previous newsletter, and more:





# Pathways to **SUCCESS**



## Clinical Pearls and Day-In-The-Life Tips for Budding Neurosurgeons

Welcome to residency—you're on one of the toughest and most rewarding journeys of your life. Here are a few pointers to get you started with this amazing ride.

On call, remember the basics: answer the phone with a calm voice, get the story straight, and don't be afraid to ask for help early. No one expects you to know everything on day one, but they do expect you to be thorough, reliable, and teachable.

In the OR, focus on the “why” of each surgical approach, not just the “how”—you'll learn faster if you understand the anatomy and decision-making behind every move. Try to visualize neuroanatomy in three dimensions and mentally rehearse each step before scrubbing in. Watch attentively, ask thoughtful questions, and take ownership of your learning—you'll be surprised how quickly the pieces come together.



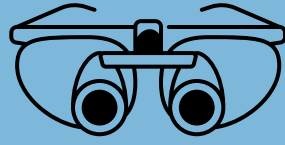
**Dr. Laura McGuire**  
**University of Wisconsin**

Dr. McGuire is an Assistant Professor at University of Wisconsin. She is fellowship-trained in both cerebrovascular and endovascular neurosurgery. She holds leadership roles in the American Medical Association. She is also a talented artist!

Set yourself up with a daily rhythm—eat when you can, hydrate, and try to get outside for five minutes of fresh air even on the busiest days. Small routines will keep you sane. Enjoy your post-call days, and after you catch up on rest, make the most of your day, whether that is to spend time with family, work on research, explore your city, run errands, or pick up a new hobby.

Most importantly, take care of yourself. Sleep when you can, lean on your co-residents, and don't bottle things up—talk about the tough cases and the hard nights. Burnout is real, but so is resilience. Protect your curiosity, your compassion, and your sense of humor. Those are the tools that will carry you through.

# Stay in the Loupe



Read the latest update on WINS social media initiatives and events

## #WINSxResearchMonday

Check out the latest studies featured on #WINSxResearchMonday to see what's new in neurosurgical training!

“ROIs in Neurosurgery: Characterizing the Current Landscape of NIH Funding for Neurosurgeon-Scientists” by Nawabi et al. found that early training predicts long-term career success. Specifically, residency research environments were more predictive of ROI attainment compared to a surgeon's eventual practice institution. “Under forty hours of laboratory training may be sufficient for teaching basic microsurgical skills to novices” by Yousfi et al. showed that students were able to gain proficiency in microsuturing, microscraping, and exoscope test tasks with forty hours of training, establishing a baseline training duration for residency programs.

Are you conducting research related to diversity, health equity, and novel science in neurosurgery? Share your work with our team by adding #WINSxResearchMonday to your posts!

## Upcoming WINS Events:

- **Medical Students:** Wondering how to balance research with the high demands of clerkships? For our rising M3's, keep your eyes peeled for our “Research Productivity on Wards” virtual event in February.
- **Residents:** Save the date for our upcoming “Senior Resident Course in Open Skull Base Surgery” on April 10-11, 2026. This event is hosted by Stryker in collaboration with WINS. Don't miss it!

Are you passionate about representation in neurosurgery? Would you like to stay connected with the WINS community? Become a member of WINS! Attendings, fellows, residents, and medical students can follow these instructions to become an official member of the WINS roster:



