

Christian Larsen receives AMA's Scientific Achievement Award

Christian P. Larsen, MD, DPhil, was presented with the American Medical Association's 2021 Scientific Achievement Award for his pioneering work that reshaped the field of transplantation. This award is presented by the AMA to individuals in recognition of an outstanding career that has fostered scientific discovery into improved clinical care.

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Brad Leshnower will apply NIH/NHLBI grant to developing predictive model for UTABD treatment

The National Institutes of Health and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute have awarded Brad Leshnower, MD, an R01 grant to study risk stratification of uncomplicated type B aortic dissection (UTABD) using clinical and engineering analysis. The project's primary objective is to develop a novel, personalized machine-learning model for predicting those patients with acute UTABD that would most likely fail optimal medical therapy and benefit instead from endovascular treatment. The design of the model will be aided by Georgia Tech biomechanical engineer Rudy Gleason, PhD.

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Uncovering why many veterans with PAD in the South experience amputations

With assistance provided by a Veterans Administration DEI Research Supplement award, Olamide Alabi, MD, will examine access to care among veterans with peripheral artery disease (PAD) in the South, particularly Black veterans; investigate care variations that lead to potentially preventable lower extremity amputation; and begin devising innovative solutions to improve the quality of care provided to veterans with PAD. The VA's Office of Research and Development applies these DEI awards to fund mentored research experiences for early career investigators from underrepresented backgrounds in medicine.

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Ravi Rajani named Assistant Dean for Education, Emory at Grady

In his new role as assistant dean for education for Emory at Grady, Ravi Rajani, MD, professor of surgery, will serve as the primary liaison between the Emory School of Medicine and Grady Memorial Hospital in the areas of Undergraduate Medical Education (UME), Allied Health, and Graduate Medical Education (GME).

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Chrystal Paulos: Top researcher honor affirmed by V Foundation grant

ETC's aim of improving immunosuppression for kidney transplant moves forward with multiple clinical trials

The naming of Chrystal Paulos, PhD, director of translational research for cutaneous malignancies at Winship Cancer Institute, as an honoree for Emory Researcher Appreciation Day has been underscored by her receipt of the V Foundation for Cancer Research 2021 Translational Award. The three-year, \$600,000 award supports bench to bedside research that hopes to lead to a future clinical trial. Dr. Paulos and her team will be studying the rejuvenation of T cells for treating patients with advanced melanoma.

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The *American Journal of Transplantation* featured a study led by I. Raul Badell, MD, comparing two different belatacept infusion schedules for kidney transplant recipients as an Editors' Pick in its September issue as well as a featured study on the AJT September Highlights podcast. The trial is one of a series of studies related to increasing kidney transplant survival that Dr. Badell and his Emory Transplant Center colleagues are conducting this year.

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Onkhar Khullar and Manu Sancheti perform Georgia's first robotic-assisted tracheobronchoplasty

In August 2021, Manu S. Sancheti, MD, and Onkar V. Khullar, MD, successfully performed Georgia's first robotic-assisted tracheobronchoplasty to treat tracheobronchomalacia at Emory University Hospital Midtown. The patient has returned home and is doing well. Performing the procedure robotically allowed the surgeons to repair the weakened walls of the trachea with precise control of tiny instruments on four thin robotic arms, resulting in smaller incisions, less pain, and quicker recovery.

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Sharon Muret-Wagstaff named to Academy of Master Surgeon Educators

Being named an affiliate member of the American College of Surgeons Academy of Master Surgeon Educators signifies Sharon Muret-Wagstaff, PhD, MPA, as a preeminent surgeon educator who has devoted her career to advancing the science and practice of surgical education.

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Deepika Koganti appointed associate program director of the Acute Care Surgery Fellowship

In this position, Deepika Koganti, MD, will be involved in administering both the acute care surgery and the surgical critical care components of the two-year Acute Care Surgery Fellowship. Dr. Koganti herself is a graduate of the fellowship.

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Faculty Recognitions Week

The week of October 18, 2021, was Faculty Recognitions Week in the Emory School of Medicine. Numerous Emory Surgery faculty were among those recognized for their accomplishments and excellence in patient care, research, and education in such categories as Hidden Gems, Dean's Teaching Award, Millipub Club, Emory 1% Award, and more.

[Peruse The Honorees](#)

2021 Annual Emory Surgery Staff Awards

Mary Ann Garcia-Bowerman, General Surgery Residency Training Program/Residency Administrator, won the 2021 Unsung Hero Award for going above and beyond the routine call of duty. She exhibits a stellar level of commitment, initiative, cooperation, and dedication. She is both dependable and trustworthy, instills a sense of responsibility and dedication to the university in her coworkers, and exemplifies excellence and integrity in workplace relationships, interactions, and decisions.

Randall Chatham-Borden, Grady Surgery/Office Manager, received the 2021 Outstanding Service Award. Randall has provided consistent and sustained excellence, exceptional performance, and service to the department and Emory University. During the pandemic, his consistent devotion to the administrative management of our Grady practice has been admirable, making him an indispensable contributor to our mission of providing quality care to the patients of Atlanta.

Keneeshia Williams' drive to educate: TEDx presenter, ACS CASEL program

As a featured speaker at the virtual TEDx Talk event "Humanity: The Repatriation," Keneeshia Williams, MD, applied her life experience and medical expertise to offering nonideological solutions to gun violence in America. Dr. Williams has also been accepted into the Certificate in Applied Surgical Education Leadership (CASEL) program of the American College of Surgeons.

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Marty Sellers named medical advisor-elect to the AOPO

Marty Sellers, MD, MPH, has been appointed medical advisor-elect for the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO), which leads the nation's organ donation community and donation process through innovation, advocacy, education, and attention to quality improvement; collaboration with stakeholders; and sharing best practices. In this position, Dr. Sellers will serve on AOPO's executive committee.

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Welcome our new faculty

After receiving his MD degree at the University of Illinois Chicago, **Barath R. Badrinathan, MD, RPVI**, completed his general surgery residency and vascular surgery fellowship at Emory University. Prior to joining Emory, he was an attending surgeon at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. His clinical interests are peripheral arterial disease, carotid disease, aortic aneurysms, dialysis access, thoracic outlet syndrome, and venous insufficiency

Jazmín M. Cole, MD, received her medical degree at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. She then completed her general surgery residency at Houston Methodist Hospital and her advanced gastrointestinal/minimally invasive surgery/flexible endoscopy surgery fellowship at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center. Her clinical specialties are abdominal wall reconstruction, hernia repair, foregut surgery, and advanced surgical endoscopy.

Heather R. Faulkner, MD, MPH, has served as director of quality and safety for the Division of Plastic Surgery at MGH, chief of plastic surgery at Mass General Brigham Salem Hospital, and assistant professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School. Her primary clinical focus is aesthetic and reconstructive surgery of the breasts and body, while her research concentrates on clinical outcomes, quality improvement, and analyses of health services.

The clinical practice of **Katherine E. Hekman, MD, PhD**, includes the vascular surgery services at Emory University Hospital and the Atlanta VA Healthcare System. She runs a basic science laboratory that studies stem cell-based regenerative medicine for

treating vascular disease, while her clinical research investigates reducing surgical site infections, optimizing the care of venous thromboembolism, and promoting wellness in surgical training.

John Lyons, MD, serves as an attending on the acute and critical care surgery service at Emory University Hospital and in the ICUs of the Emory Critical Care Center. During his Emory general surgery residency he did a three-year research sabbatical in the lab of Emory sepsis and shock investigator Craig Coopersmith, MD. For two of those years he also worked with transplant immunologist Mandy Ford, PhD.

Felipe Maegawa, MD, MS, is an award-winning educator of technical skills in the operating room for both medical students and surgical residents. Before joining Emory, he was an associate professor of surgery at the University of Arizona, clinical director of general surgery for the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, and site director for the general surgery residency training program at the Southern Arizona VA.

During her general surgery residency at Baylor College of Medicine, **Meredith C. Mason, MD**, did a two-year fellowship in clinical and health services research at the Houston Health Services Research and Development Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety (IQUEST). She joined Emory after completing her clinical fellowship in complex general surgical oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Ahmed Nassar, MD, joined Emory Surgery after completing his abdominal transplant surgery fellowship at the Emory Transplant Center. During his research fellowship in ex-vivo organ perfusion at the Cleveland Clinic, OH, he assisted in developing an organ perfusion device that received an investigational device exemption from the FDA for clinical use.

Omobolanle (Mobola) Oyefule, MD, graduated with a medical degree from Vanderbilt School of Medicine, completed her general surgery residency at Cleveland Clinic, FL, and did an advanced GI/bariatric/minimally invasive surgery fellowship at Mayo Clinic, Rochester. Her clinical roles include performing minimally invasive general surgery and bariatric surgery at Emory University Hospital Midtown.

Kirsten Baecher selected for the SESC Gold Medal Resident Paper Award

Kirsten Baecher, MD, received the Gold Medal Resident Paper Award at the 2021 Southeastern Surgical Congress Annual Meeting. The presentation of her winning paper was funded by the inaugural SESC Foundation Young Investigator Award, an honor that recognizes and promotes a resident or medical student-authored abstract that displays promising research.

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R. Anthony Meena receives 2nd GVS Robert B. Smith, III, MD, Resident Award

R. Anthony Meena, MD, Emory PGY-3 integrated vascular surgery resident, has been recognized with the Robert B. Smith, III, MD, Resident Award by the Georgia Vascular Foundation at the Georgia Vascular Society's 2021 Annual Scientific Sessions. This is the second time he has received the award, the first being at the 2018 GVS Sessions.

James Jeong recognized with AAOMS Scientific Presentation Award for 1st-time study

James Jeong MD, DMD, PGY-4 oral and maxillofacial surgery resident, was honored with the Oral Abstract Scientific Presentation Award at the 103rd Annual Meeting of the Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons for his study "What is the orbital volume of African Americans," the first project of its type to attempt this determination.

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Chief general surgery resident **Deena Chihade, MD**, placed second in the resident abstract awards competition of the Southern Region Burn Virtual Conference 2020 for her abstract, "Autologous epidermal skin cell suspension: A cost-effective treatment for burns >20% TBSA in a county hospital with limited resources." Rohit Mittal, MD, director of the Burn Reconstruction Program at Grady Memorial Hospital's Burn Center, was Dr. Chihade's mentor for the study and co-author. [The complete abstract and Dr. Chihade's video presentation can be found here.](#)

[The Cardiac Tumor Program at Emory](#), a collaboration between Winship Cancer Institute and the Emory Heart and Vascular Center, is one of the few such programs in the country. Led by **Mani A. Daneshmand, MD**, and Anant Mandawat MD, the program's multidisciplinary team evaluates, diagnoses, and treats patients and helps them navigate this complex disease.

PGY-4 general surgery resident **Brendan Lovasik, MD**, was a top 10 finalist for the American College of Surgeons 2021 Resident Award for Exemplary Teaching. In addition to providing training and mentorship to junior residents and medical students, Dr. Lovasik has led and published on several educational initiatives in the Department of Surgery. He was recently chosen by the Emory residency program for the J.D. Martin Surgical Resident Award, "In recognition of excellence in the field of surgery and dedication to surgical education."

Rachel Medbery, MD, who graduated from the Emory general surgery residency in 2016 and completed her three-year Emory thoracic surgery fellowship in 2019, [was featured in *Austin Woman* magazine](#) as the first female thoracic surgeon in Central Texas. Dr. Medbery is an attending at Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgeons (CTVS) in Austin. In the article, she describes five ways to surmount obstacles to realizing dreams, particularly for women.

Virginia Shaffer, MD, has been appointed to the editorial board of the *Journal of Surgical Research: Clinical and Laboratory Investigation*, which publishes original articles concerned with clinical and laboratory investigations relevant to surgical practice and teaching. The journal emphasizes reports of clinical investigations or fundamental research bearing directly on surgical management that will be of general interest to a broad range of surgeons and surgical researchers.

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