Gerald Larson, MD, Retires After Illustrious Career Spanning Four Decades

The Department of Surgery celebrated the career of Gerald “Gerry” Larson at two retirement events in August. A prolific researcher, dedicated surgeon and enthusiastic educator, Dr. Larson completed his undergraduate and medical degrees at the University of Minnesota, his residency in general surgery at Boston University and a fellowship in surgical gastroenterology at the University of Illinois. Prior to joining the faculty in the Department of Surgery at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, Dr. Larson worked as an assistant professor of surgery at the University of Illinois. Dr. Larson also was a Major in the United States Army Medical Corps for two years at the U.S. Army Hospital in Nuremberg, West Germany, where he received a Letter of Commendation.

A Professor of Surgery, Dr. Larson has been the ERCP Fellowship Co-Director since the program’s inception in 1993. Throughout his career, Dr. Larson has been an active clinical surgeon while being an integral part of numerous national and local surgical professional organizations, serving as President of the Central Surgical Association, on the Board of Governors and as Vice President of the Publications Committee of the Society of American Gastrointestinal Surgeons and President of the Kentucky Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy.

In addition to an eminent professional career, Dr. Larson has spent his life engaged in humanitarian efforts locally and overseas. He served on the Board of Directors of Cedar Lake Lodge, a private not-for-profit organization that assists people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He is now an Emeritus Board of Directors Member for Cedar Lake Lodge. He also was a board member for Hand in Hand Ministries, past committee member for Supplies Over Seas and current Advisory Board Member for Supplies Over Seas. Dr. Larson was a volunteer surgeon on various world medical missions in Kenya and Cameroon.

The Department is fortunate that Dr. Larson, now Professor Emeritus, will remain part of the Department as gratis faculty and lecturer and thus continue to shape the minds of future surgeons.
Welcome to the 2017 issue of Sutureline, a newsletter about the Hiram C. Polk, Jr., MD, Department of Surgery at the University of Louisville.

While it has been a tumultuous year for the University of Louisville, the Department of Surgery has continued to thrive. Once again this year, we drafted an outstanding group of residents in General Surgery and Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery and excellent Colorectal Surgery, Surgical Oncology, Pediatric Surgery, Critical Care and ERCP fellows.

In this issue of Sutureline, we pay tribute to distinguished surgeon Norton Waterman, MD, who passed away this fall, welcome new faculty members, all of whom are former trainees, celebrate the retirement of a faculty member, introduce our new faculty and staff member feature, boast about numerous department, faculty and staff accomplishments and much more.

We would like to thank all of you who have donated to the Department this year. We truly appreciate your loyalty to the Department of Surgery. We need your support to continue our missions in surgical education, patient care and research so the tradition of excellence of the Department of Surgery at UofL, which dates back to 1837, can continue.

If you have not already given or have the capacity to do more, please consider making a gift to the Department of Surgery this holiday season.

Warmest wishes for the holidays and the year ahead,

Kelly M. McMasters, MD, PhD
Ben A. Reid, Sr., MD, Professor and Chairman
Hiram C. Polk, Jr., MD, Department of Surgery
University of Louisville School of Medicine

Department of Surgery Raises Money Owen’s Wish Fund

The faculty and staff of the Department of Surgery raised more than $16,000 for the Owen’s Wish Fund for Cancer Immunotherapy Research of the J. Graham Brown Cancer Center during the month of September in honor of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

The Owen’s Wish Fund was established in honor of Owen McMasters in October 2016. It will enable the Brown Cancer Center to develop a world-class group of scientists and physicians dedicated to advancing the field of cancer immunotherapy and providing state-of-the-art immunotherapy care for patients in our region.

To donate, please visit browncancercenter.louisville.edu/owf-fldr.

Department Celebrates Dr. Miller’s Teaching Awards

Last December, the Department of Surgery faculty and staff presented Professor Emeritus Frank Miller, MD, with a plaque recognizing Dr. Miller for accumulating the largest number of teaching awards.

“Dr. Miller is adored by an entire generation of medical students, residents, fellows, nurses, and other health-care professionals for his teaching skill and compassion,” said Kelly McMasters, MD, PhD, Chairman of the Department of Surgery and Professor of Surgery. “He has been the best teacher in the medical school for decades. His contributions cannot be overstated.”

Save the Date

JANUARY 18, 2018
Mathews Oration

FEBRUARY 1 & 2, 2018
Griswold Lectureship

FEBRUARY 15, 2018
Garrison Lectureship

MAY 10 & 11, 2018
Gross Lectureship

JUNE 28, 2018
Chief Resident Graduation Dinner at The Olmsted

SEPTEMBER 13, 2018
Short Lectureship
Gordon Tobin, MD, Named
2017 Ephraim McDowell Physician of the Year

Gordon Tobin, MD, was awarded the Ephraim McDowell Physician of the Year at the 2017 Jewish Hospital & St. Mary’s Foundation Doctors’ Ball.

The Ephraim McDowell Physician of the Year honors a physician who has made significant contributions to the field of medicine, provided humanitarian service, and demonstrated the highest ethical standards.

Born and raised in Idaho, Dr. Tobin completed his undergraduate degree at Whitman College in Washington and his medical degree at the University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco. He completed residencies in general surgery and plastic surgery at the University of Arizona before coming to Louisville.

Dr. Tobin career encompasses surgical education, pioneering medial research, care for the underserved at home and abroad and physician leadership in local, state and national organizations. Professor of Surgery and former Plastic Surgery Director, he founded a robust research laboratory that developed many new reconstructive techniques and pioneered hand and face transplantation. He is Director of Craniofacial Transplantation at UofL and an original member of the team that laid essential research foundations and performed the world’s first successful hand transplant in 1999.

Dr. Tobin is a member of the Jewish Hospital and UofL Cardiac Innovation Institute Pancreatic Islet Transplantation Team, which seeks a cure for diabetes. He also studies and writes extensively on medical ethics and medical history. He has written more than 300 scientific and medical papers, book chapters and books.

Throughout his career, Dr. Tobin has embraced medical missions abroad and at home. In 1991, he co-founded the Vietnam Burn Care Mission to bring modern burn care to Southeast Asia. The mission team made repeated medical care and teaching visits to Vietnam burn centers over the subsequent decade, leading to vastly improved burn survival. He is a care provider and board member of Healing the Children. His long-standing support of The Healing Place has helped the recovery program reach beyond alcohol-dependency recovery to address the current opioid and heroin epidemic. Dr. Tobin is also a long-standing supporter of Kentucky’s Supplies Over Seas (SOS) organization. He led the 2005 SOS effort for Afghanistan and is involved in current relief effort for Syrian refugee camps.

Dr. Tobin has served in local, state and national roles in various medical societies. He is Past President of both the Greater Louisville Medical Society (GLMS) and the Kentucky Medical Association (KMA) and continues service on the KMA Foundation Board. His key advocacies are promoting health-enhancing behavior, protecting a health-sustaining environment and finding consensus solutions to fully ensure health care for all citizens.

Sharlene Dillander Wins
School of Medicine’s Heart of the School Award

Sharlene Dillander, program coordinator, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, received UofL School of Medicine’s Heart of the School Award.

Sharlene has been with the Division of Plastic Surgery since May 2007. She serves as the Division’s administrative assistant and residency program coordinator. In addition to excelling in her job, Sharlene creates camaraderie in the Department of Surgery by organizing countless humanitarian efforts that serve those in need. Some of the organizations that have benefited from the community service projects she has organized are The Healing Place, Spradling Rest Home, Dare To Care, the United States military (care packages) and Wayside Christian Mission.

“Sharlene creates great camaraderie and exemplifies the qualities that build a culture of competence, courtesy and caring throughout our Department. Her personal example and team leadership make her most worthy of this recognition,” said Gordon Tobin, Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. “The crowning endorsement for her receiving this award is her repeated, caring leadership of the Department’s humanitarian endeavors that serve others.”
DEPARTMENT & ALUMNI NEWS AND NOTES

ROBERT C.G. MARTIN II, MD, PhD, has been named Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery for Research. He will be responsible for coordinating basic, translational, clinical and outcomes research programs across the Department of Surgery and facilitate collaborative research team-building. In addition, he will coordinate research mentorship opportunities for residents and students. Dr. Martin is Division Director of the Division of Surgical Oncology and Professor of Surgery.

J. DAVID RICHARDSON, MD is the 2017 recipient of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners’ prestigious Warner L. Jones Jr. Horseman of the Year Award, which recognizes individuals for outstanding contributions to Kentucky racing and sharing the passion exemplified by Jones. Dr. Richardson is Professor and Vice Chairman of Surgery.

Administrative Chief Resident ANNIE NAGENGAST, MD appeared on an episode of Wheel of Fortune in August. Visit the Department of Surgery Web site to watch it.

THE TRANSPLANT TEAM reached several milestones this year. It completed 5,000 organ transplants, including 3,000 kidney transplants and its 900th liver transplant.

JORGE G. GOMEZ-GUTIERREZ, PhD’s project entitled “Targeting melanoma hypoxia with lactic acid bacterium L. lactis” was selected for a National Institutes of Health grant. Dr. Gomez-Gutierrez is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology.

The Division of Surgical Oncology recruited exceptional resident and fellow, MICHAEL EGGER, MD, MPH, to join the Department of Surgery. Dr. Egger attended medical school at Emory University, completed his residency in general surgery, research fellowship and a masters in public health at the University of Louisville and a fellowship in surgical oncology at University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

The Division of Pediatric Surgery recruited its outstanding fellow, TIFFANY WRIGHT, MD, to join the Department of Surgery. Dr. Wright attended medical school at University of Kentucky College of Medicine, where she also completed her general surgery residency. She then completed fellowships in fetal surgery and surgical critical care at the University of Michigan and pediatric surgery at the University of Louisville.

The Division of Transplantation recruited remarkable resident, ROBERT CANNON, MD, to join the Department of Surgery. Dr. Cannon attended medical school at Medical College of Georgia and completed his residency in general surgery at the University of Louisville and a fellowship in abdominal transplant surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

In Memoriam

Department of Surgery Remembers Norton Waterman, MD, Distinguished Surgeon

Former gratis faculty member, distinguished surgeon and humanitarian Dr. Norton Waterman passed away Oct. 6, 2017. He was 89.

Dr. Waterman was born in Louisville and raised in Greenwood, Miss. After serving in the United States Army Chemical Corps, he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Tennessee. He graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1955 and completed his residency at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis in 1960. He established a private practice in surgery the same year in Louisville, where he practiced for the entirety of a long and distinguished career.

Dr. Waterman served his community and his profession in many roles, among them Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Louisville Medical School, President of the Medical Staff of Jewish Hospital, President of Louisville Surgical Society and President of Jefferson County Medical Society. In the latter role, he founded the humanitarian organization Supplies Over Seas (SOS), which collects and ships surplus medical supplies and equipment to developing and impoverished countries.
Christopher Jones, MD, decided to become a doctor because growing up, he did not see many people who resembled him in the medical community.

“There were African-American nurses, respiratory therapists and other medical technicians but no physicians,” he said. “When I expressed my concern to my father, he took me to visit Eastern Virginia Medical School, where he introduced me to Dr. L.D. Britt. That meeting was life-changing for me. Soon thereafter I knew I wanted to be just like Dr. Britt.”

Dr. Jones attended medical school at Georgetown University, trained in general surgery at Vanderbilt University and completed a fellowship in liver, kidney, pancreas and small intestine transplantation at UCLA, the nation’s premier transplant program.

“We were fortunate to recruit him to the University of Louisville where he has risen to the rank of Director of the Division of Transplantation,” said Kelly McMasters, MD, PhD, Chairman of the Department of Surgery and Professor of Surgery. “Transplantation is enormously complex and multidisciplinary. It involves outstanding executive leadership skills and management across a wide array of clinical, business and regulatory environments. Dr. Jones has done a tremendous job for our program.”

Dr. Jones chose to become a transplant surgeon in honor of a very special friend, Rose. When he was younger, he and his brother played with Rose every weekend when they visited their grandmother’s house, and she became like a sister to him. One weekend, when he was visiting, he saw an ambulance at Rose’s house.

“I can vividly remember Rose being wheeled out of her house on a stretcher, and the EMT saying to his partner ‘she needs a liver transplant, but she probably ain’t going to get one,’” Dr. Jones recalled.

Unfortunately, that was the last time Dr. Jones saw Rose alive, but at her funeral on December 4, 1982 he told her parents that he would never let anyone die that needed a liver transplant.

“It was at that moment that I dedicated my life to being a liver transplant surgeon,” Dr. Jones said. “Each day I come to work I try to keep my promise to Rose’s parents.”

Dr. Jones said his favorite part of his job is operating on patients and seeing them at their first post-operative appointment.

“Patients feel 100 times better after they receive their organ, and they are anxious to show us things they couldn’t do before,” he said. “It’s a good feeling.”

He said his least favorite part of his job is not being able to perform a transplant on everyone who needs one. Patients are not candidates for transplantation for three main reasons: insurmountable psychosocial issues, poor medical condition and financial issues.

“I can accept psychosocial issues and poor medical condition, but financial issues shouldn’t be a reason we don’t save a life. I would like to eradicate financial issues as being a barrier to receiving a life-saving organ transplant,” he said. “To that end I am working with local and regional philanthropists to help shore up our patient assistance fund. I am also working with the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) to develop more overarching plans to remove finances as a barrier.”

When he is not working, Dr. Jones enjoys spending time with his family. His children are in multiple sports, and he can be seen cheering from the sidelines when he is not at the hospital. He also enjoys fishing.

“There’s something about the serenity that comes with fishing that you can’t find anywhere else. It gives my mind a break from all of the hustle and bustle of daily life,” he said. “It is very cathartic for me, and it allows me to reset and focus on the important things.”

He enjoys taking his family to Cape Hatteras in North Carolina for vacation.

“It’s a special place for me because that’s where my dad would always take me and my brother for our ‘weekend for men.’ I only recently found out that my dad was giving my mother a break from us when we took our trips,” he said. “I learned a lot on those weekend trips. The small house we stayed in had no special accommodations, not even a television. Needless to say, we did a lot of talking. My father was a minister so he could definitely talk, but he was a good teacher too. I think spending that time with my dad is what molded me into the person I am today.”
The Department of Surgery established the Samuel Gross, M.D., Career of Service Award in 2006 to honor physicians who have dedicated their lives to medicine. This year’s recipient is lifelong friend of the Department of Surgery, former resident, clinical faculty member and dedicated surgeon Russell Williams, MD.

Dr. Williams received his medical degree in 1985 from the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He completed his general surgery residency at the University of Louisville Hospital in 1990. He worked in the laboratory of J. David Richardson, MD, where he developed an experimental model for Barrett’s esophagus.

He has worked as a general surgeon in Louisville for nearly three decades and has served on the clinical faculty in the Department of Surgery. Dr. Williams also has been extremely active representing fellow physicians in the Greater Louisville Medical Society (GLMS). He served progressively as Treasurer, then President and eventually Chair of the Board of GLMS.

He has been a member of the Kentucky Medical Association since completing medical school, serving as a delegate for 20 years and an alternate trustee from 2015 - 2017. He is also a member of the American College of Surgeons, Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons, Southeastern Surgical Congress and Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons.

The Department of Surgery presented the 2017 Samuel Gross, MD Career of Service Award to Dr. Russell Williams at the 2017 Chief Residents’ Dinner in June.

Career of Service:

Russell Williams, MD,
Recipient of 2017 Samuel Gross, M.D.,
Career of Service Award

Price Institute of Surgical Research Celebrates 60 Years

The Price Institute for Surgical Research held a reunion Sept. 7 - 9 in honor of its 60th Anniversary. More than 30 people attended, including former Price fellows from all over the world. Additionally, a former Fulbright scholar returned from Moldova. Attendees gave scientific presentations and talks about the benefits of having done research at the Price Institute.

The Price Institute’s founder, John W. Price, Jr., MD, was a surgeon, financier and visionary. Dr. Price joined the faculty of the University of Louisville School of Medicine in 1908. His research in vascular surgery culminated in a paper he published in 1915 about arterial anastomoses.

Price’s family profession in finance influenced his decision to invest his talents in the financial sector. He believed in the promise of basic research and in 1957 established a generous trust to attract the best and brightest surgical research fellows to the University of Louisville.

Since its inception, 29 surgery residents or surgeons have been Price Fellows. The Price Institute also is host to Ferguson Fellows, visiting professors and Fulbright Scholars who come to brainstorm with colleagues while learning the latest operative techniques and medical treatments for diseases affecting the surgical patient.

Kelly McMasters Continues Tradition of Excellence

One of the hallmarks of the Department of Surgery has been the tremendous amount of leadership shown by its faculty. This has been particularly true historically of the various chairs of the Department of Surgery. And the tradition continues with current chair, Kelly McMasters, MD, PhD.

Dr. McMasters serves as Secretary of the Southern Surgical Association. He just completed his term as President of the Western Surgical Association, after serving as its Recorder for several years. He is the current President of the Society of Surgical Oncology, and during the American College of Surgeons’ meeting in fall, he was elected as President of the Society of Academic Chairs. He also was recently named Editor of the Annals of Surgical Oncology.

Dr. McMasters also was selected to be one of 50 leading oncologists in the United States to contribute to the US Cancer Moonshot initiative, which was published in The Lancet Oncology in October.

“Our faculty and residents need to be aware of all that Dr. McMasters has done in continuing the outstanding record of our senior faculty in leading regional and national surgical organizations,” said J. David Richardson, MD, Professor and Vice Chairman of Surgery. “It is a tremendous legacy of the department that is almost unparalleled in other departments around the country and one in which we all should take enormous pride.”
STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Pamela Schmidt
Coordinator and Assistant to the Chairman

Working for one organization for nearly 30 years translates into many memories. For Pamela Schmidt her fondest was the year several Department of Surgery staff members organized, visited and hosted a holiday party at a nursing home in Southern Indiana.

“We dressed up as different holiday characters, sang songs with the residents, distributed stuffed animals and served refreshments,” she said. “It was a very meaningful experience to know that we helped to make their holiday season brighter.”

And Pam makes the Department of Surgery a little brighter every day.

“Pam is the epitome of all that is good in the world,” said Debbie Krause, Coordinator, Department of Surgery. “She is immensely dedicated to her job, thorough beyond belief, loyal to her friends and co-workers and kindness personified.”

Graduate Medical Education Coordinator Molly Poole calls Pam the “hub” of the Department of Surgery.

“She exemplifies our Department mantra, ‘Excellence is not an accident, it is expected,’” Poole said. “She is a team player and will help anyone with any project, no matter how busy she might be. She is the employee that all others strive to be like.”

In her role as assistant to Department of Surgery Chairman, Kelly McMasters, MD, PhD, Pam manages multiple tasks daily, including maintaining Dr. McMasters’ busy calendar, overseeing and supervising the faculty candidate recruitment process for the department and divisions and assisting the departmental administrator with various office functions.

“There is not a harder working, more pleasant individual to represent the University of Louisville,” McMasters said. “She is reliable, conscientious, trustworthy and friendly. She is a consummate professional who efficiently and effectively manages many complex tasks and projects simultaneously. She handles all of these duties with grace and poise. Pam embodies excellence and makes our Department an exceptional learning environment for our students, residents and fellows and working environment for our faculty and staff.”

Pam said her favorite part of her job is organizing travel and meeting new people. When she is not working, she enjoys traveling, cooking, gardening and spending time with friends and family, especially her new grandson, Oliver.

“He has truly enriched our lives,” she said, “and helps us to focus on what is truly important.”

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550 South Jackson Street
Second Floor
Louisville, KY 40202

Sutureline

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Where Are They Now

2017 Residents

DYLAN ADAMSON, Transplant Fellowship, Mt. Sinai Health System, New York, NY
JORDON BROWN, Private Practice, New Albany, IN
CHARLES KIMBROUGH, Surgical Oncology Fellowship, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
STEPHANIE MASTRANGELO, Breast Surgery Fellowship, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN
GARRETT MORTENSON, ERCP Fellowship, University of Louisville
KAREN PARKS, Vascular Fellowship, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

CALL TO ALUMNI:
Please keep in touch and let us know what is happening with you, your practice and your family. We apologize in advance for any errors of omission. Please send your news items and updated addresses to RTBomb01@louisville.edu or call 502.931.8804.