
Fellows honored for volunteerism

The Governors' Committee on Socioeconomic Issues is pleased to announce the 2009 recipients of the American College of Surgeons/Pfizer, Inc, Surgical Humanitarian Award and Surgical Volunteerism Awards, including the newly established category for residents. The committee received nominations for many exceptional individuals, once again demonstrating the substantial commitment of the Fellows of the College to the care of the underserved. The awards will be presented at the Clinical Congress in October in Chicago, IL.

Edgar Rodas, MD, FACS, of Cuenca, Ecuador, will be awarded the Surgical Humanitarian Award (see photo, this page). Following his graduation from the University of Cuenca's medical school, Dr. Rodas spent a year volunteering aboard the *SS Hope* with the not-for-profit organization Project Hope. Upon returning to Ecuador, he embarked on a long and illustrious surgical career that has been characterized by service. Whether leading surgical missions to deliver care to the underserved in rural Ecuador, or working to establish a branch of the not-for-profit organization, Interplast, in the country, his devotion to those in need is exemplary. In 1990, he founded the Cinterandes Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that promotes human development. Cinterandes launched a mobile



Dr. Rodas examining an Achuar Indian patient (note the pet monkey on the patient's head).

surgery program in 1994, after constructing a van equipped with an operating room, allowing doctors to deliver care to areas that were previously inaccessible. Building on the foundation of that program, the Cinterandes Foundation introduced additional programs in nutrition, immunization, and maternal health, to ensure recipients would receive a full spectrum of necessary care.

Dr. Rodas' commitment to public service has extended to

the highest levels of government, where he was appointed Minister of Health for Ecuador. For his lifetime of effort to bring comprehensive surgical care to the underserved in Ecuador, Dr. Rodas will receive this year's Surgical Humanitarian Award.

Douglas P. Grey, MD, FACS, and **William P. Schecter, MD, FACS**, of San Francisco, CA, founders of the not-for-profit organization Operation Access, will be jointly awarded the Surgical Volunteerism Award

for their domestic outreach efforts (see photos, this page). Drs. Grey and Schecter are longtime friends and colleagues who serve as chief of vascular surgery at Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Medical Center, and chief of surgery at San Francisco General Hospital, respectively.

At a Clinical Congress in the early 1990s, Drs. Grey and Schecter were inspired by a speaker who questioned why surgeons weren't more involved in caring for the underserved in the U.S., and they decided to address that challenge in their own community. In 1993, they co-founded Operation Access, a not-for-profit organization that mobilizes an entire network of medical volunteers, referring community clinics, and hospitals to provide donated outpatient surgeries and specialty care to the uninsured and underinsured.

Since its inception, Operation Access has had a positive impact on the health, quality of life, and ability to work of thousands of low-income patients lacking access to surgical care. Their program has proven effective both clinically and financially, and is considered a model for surgical care delivery to the underserved in the U.S. For their success in providing surgical care to those individuals in greatest need in their community, Drs. Grey and Schecter are this year's recipients of the Surgical Volunteerism Award for domestic service.

Glenn W. Geelhoed, MD, FACS, of Washington, DC, will be awarded the Surgical Volunteerism Award for international outreach in recognition



Dr. Grey in surgery.



Dr. Schecter with a patient.

of his devotion to providing surgical care and education throughout the world (see photo, page 33). Each year, Dr. Geelhoed assembles six to eight surgical missions, with teams of medical students, resi-

dents, and physicians. Over the course of his career, he has led more than 200 such missions to Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, and South America, and has inspired countless others to take up the mantle.

As a Senior Fulbright Scholar in 1996, he undertook the necessary research and service to develop the African Regional Research Program.

Since 1975, his academic base has been George Washington University, where he is professor of international medicine. Dr. Geelhoed is currently developing an international health center and international medical education program for the university. For his tireless efforts in working with countless surgeons to provide surgical care and education all across the globe, and his vast influence on generations of like-minded surgeons, Dr. Geelhoed is to be awarded this year's Surgical Volunteerism Award for international service.

Vance J. Moss, MD, FACS, and **Vincent L. Moss, MD, FACS,** of Upland, PA, will jointly receive the Surgical Volunteerism Award for military service in recognition of their contributions in Afghanistan (see photo, this page). After joining the U.S. Army Reserve Medical Corps during their residencies, the Moss brothers were mobilized in 2005 for Operation Enduring Freedom, and deployed domestically to treat soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. After learning about the lack of surgical and medical care available to Afghan civilians, they began organizing a surgical mission to Afghanistan. With the support of an independent organization, Medical Teams International, the Mosses established contacts in Afghanistan to identify areas that were most in need of surgical care, secured transportation, security, and translators.



Dr. Geelhoed (right) at work.



Drs. Vance Moss and Vincent Moss in Afghanistan.

In January 2006, they flew to Kabul to undertake their first mission. After demonstrating their commitment to a humanitarian mission with a focus on treating women and children, they were granted access to regions controlled by the Taliban and local warlords. The success of this first mission resulted in a return visit the following year. The Moss brothers remain committed to Afghanistan while here in the U.S., arranging for an eight-year-old boy and his father to travel to New York City in order to complete surgical treatment started on one of the missions.

Currently, the Mosses are in private practice in New Jersey. For service to their country that inspired surgical outreach to civilians in one of the most remote and dangerous areas of the world, Drs. Vince and Vance Moss are the 2009 recipients of the Surgical Volunteerism Award for military service.

Awori J. Hayanga, MD, of Superior, MI, will receive the inaugural Surgical Volunteerism Award for resident service for his founding role, and ongoing work, with the Reuben J. Williams (R JW) Foundation (see photo, this page). Born and raised in Kenya, Dr. Hayanga left Africa to pursue a medical education in Europe. He moved to the U.S. to begin surgical training at Johns Hopkins University Hospital, and later he moved to the University of Michigan, where he served as the administrative chief resident. During residency, Dr. Hayanga co-founded the R JW Foundation, which is committed to improving the delivery of



Dr. Hayanga

surgical care in resource-poor settings through enhancing surgical education and fostering networks of academic medical institutions in sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the U.S. The foundation incorporates curriculum development and research into a variety of areas, including epidemiology, health delivery, policy, and education, and has established a distinguished lecture series that has attracted chairs of surgery from several prestigious institutions to the University of Nairobi. Dr. Hayanga intends to return to Kenya after his residency as the first academic general thoracic surgeon in east and central Africa. Recognizing the

remarkable accomplishment of founding, and successfully administering, the R JW Foundation during his residency and for his commitment to improving the delivery of surgical care to some of the world's most vulnerable citizens, Dr. Hayanga will be presented the Surgical Volunteerism Award for resident service.

The exceptional contributions made by Dr. Rodas, Dr. Grey, Dr. Schechter, Dr. Geelhoed, Dr. Vance Moss, Dr. Vincent Moss, and Dr. Hayanga will be formally recognized at the annual Board of Governors dinner on Tuesday, October 13, during the annual Clinical Congress in Chicago, IL. Congress at-

tendees are invited to hear these physicians speak about their inspiration and work at the panel session on volunteerism (PS06)—which will convene Monday, October 12,

9:45 am–1:00 pm—and to meet them and others dedicated to surgical volunteerism, in all its many forms, at a volunteer networking reception later that evening.

Full details on these events will be available in the *Clinical Congress News* and on the Operation Giving Back Web site at www.operationgivingback.facs.org.