
Report of the 2009 Oweida Scholar

by Nathan C. Kanning, MD, FACS

As I write this review of the 2009 Clinical Congress in Chicago, IL, I am happy to relate the importance and impact the Nizar N. Oweida, MD, FACS, Scholarship had on my experience. As a surgeon freshly out of training, this was the ideal time for me to attend the Clinical Congress, and the Nizar N. Oweida Scholarship allowed me to accomplish this without added financial worries.

Having been in practice only one year, I was able to focus my sessions and courses on the areas I felt were most relevant to my everyday practice. As residency is completed, we are expected to perform Whipples, aortobifemoral bypasses, esophagectomies, and every other difficult surgical procedure. However, the reality for the rural surgeon is that these procedures rarely come along. And if they do, most of the time, they are sent to specialists with adequate ICU, resident, or medical backup. The most difficult aspect of transitioning from resident to rural surgeon has not been the operating, but the decision making related to when to operate.

Educationally, I could not have been happier. I was able to attend all the sessions I wanted, and most of the postgraduate courses, as well. What I wasn't able to attend, I have been able to review through the ACS webcasts



Dr. Kanning speaking at the Rural Surgeons Symposium at the 2009 Clinical Congress. On the panel with Dr. Kanning, left to right, are Thomas H. Cogbill, MD, FACS, then-Vice-Chair of the Advisory Council on General Surgery; David V. Feliciano, MD, FACS, Chair of the Advisory Council for General Surgery; and Dr. Russell, then Executive Director of the College.

and audio recordings. This has been a great resource, as I have been able to listen to the original session once at the Clinical Congress, and then review the lectures as needed at home. I am not sure I would have purchased this option without the assistance of the Nizar N. Oweida Scholarship.

Additionally, I was able to experience this Clinical Congress from a different perspective. It started on Sunday afternoon, with the scholarships luncheon. I was able to listen to discussions

about all the great work that residents and staff are pursuing with the assistance of the College. I was also able to address a very distinguished panel at the Rural Surgeons Symposium that included Thomas R. Russell, MD, FACS, then ACS Executive Director, regarding the importance of the rural surgeon and how we need the support of the College now more than ever. It was through my Nizar N. Oweida Scholarship that I was given the opportunity to express my views and have them addressed by the ACS.

Lastly, I would like to express the importance of continuing relationships and forming new bonds with fellow surgeons. I was able to spend time with a mentor and friend, David Oehling, MD, FACS, from Grants Pass, OR. He is a member of the staff in Grants Pass for the Oregon Health and Science University's year-long rural surgery program. He was an instrumental part of my decision to pursue rural surgery

as a career. I would also like to recognize Patrick O'Hara, MD, FACS, vascular surgeon at the Cleveland Clinic, in Cleveland, OH. I met him at last year's Clinical Congress. He was extremely open to all of my questions regarding a rural surgeon performing vascular surgery. I truly enjoyed our conversations during sessions and on the shuttle bus to and from the convention center.

In conclusion, I would like

to thank the Oweida family for having the foresight to establish this scholarship. I hope it will be as beneficial for future recipients as it was to me. I know I, as well as my patients, have benefited from the generosity of the Oweida family and the ACS.

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