

# Faculty News



Neurosurgery residents Drs. Lindsey Ross, Julie Chan and Angelique Do

## Women on the Verge

Three female residents forge futures in the historically male-dominated specialty of neurosurgery.

By STEPHANIE STEPHENS

Even after decades of progress, women still only account for about 17% of neurosurgery residents in accredited programs nationwide. As recently as 2018, the *Journal of Neurosurgery* lamented that the goal of gender parity in the field seems “remote.”

But not at Cedars-Sinai, where the number of female residents in neurosurgery recently reached an all-time high. Out of a total number of 1,424 female residents nationwide, three are being trained at Cedars-Sinai: Julie Chan, MD, PhD, Angelique

Do, MD, and Lindsey Ross, MD.

While this number—which keeps rising—may seem small, these women’s contributions in operating rooms, to patients and even in the foreign countries where they volunteer are immense.

“They are among the best and the brightest attracted to the field,” says Keith Black, MD, chair of the Department of Neurosurgery, director of the Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute, and the

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**Richard N. Bergman, PhD**, was named to Clarivate Analytics’ 2018 list of Highly Cited Researcher citation and identifies research determined by their peers around the globe and by records that position them in the top 1% of citations for their field during the year. Bergman is the Alfred Jay Firestein Chair in Diabetes Research.

**Jonathan Braun, MD, PhD**, a pathologist and pioneering researcher in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), has joined the Cedars-Sinai F. Widjaja Foundation Inflammatory Bowel and Immunobiology Research Institute as director of Enterprise Operations. He is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for the International Early Onset Pediatric IBD Cohort Study, and chair of the Scientific Advisory Board for the Milieu Intérieur Consortium of Institut Pasteur in Paris. Braun previously spent three decades at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

**Susan Cheng, MD, MPH, MMSc**, has been named the Erika J. Glazer Chair in Women’s Cardiovascular Health and Population Science. Cheng, who joined the Smidt Heart Institute in 2018 as director of



Cardiovascular Population Sciences in the Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Center and as director of Public Health Research, is a cardiologist, echocardiographer and clinician-scientist who leads research aimed at uncovering the drivers of cardiovascular aging in women and men.

**Sumeet Chugh, MD**, received the 2019 Douglas P. Zipes Lectureship Award from the Heart Rhythm Society. The honor is bestowed annually to a scientist or clinician who has made a significant and unique contribution to the field of cardiac electrophysiology. Chugh is the Pauline and Harold Price Chair in Cardiac Electrophysiology Research.

**Timothy Daskivich, MD**, received the American Urological Association's Rising Stars in Urology Research Award, which is presented to two junior investigators each year and includes a grant of up to five years of supplemental salary support to encourage career development in biomedical, behavioral and patient-oriented research.

**Neal S. ElAttrache, MD**, was installed as the 47th president of the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine in July 2018. He is head team physician

for the Los Angeles Dodgers and Los Angeles Rams, and an orthopaedic consultant to the Los Angeles Angels, Los Angeles Clippers, Los Angeles Kings and Anaheim Ducks.

**Robert A. Figlin, MD**, was named 2018 Educator of the Year by Physicians' Education Resource. The award highlights the accomplishments of oncology leaders and honors their efforts to advance the field through innovative and collaborative education. Figlin is the Steven Spielberg Family Chair in Hematology-Oncology.

**James D. Grant, MD, MBA**, has joined Cedars-Sinai as chair of the Department of Anesthesiology and physician-executive in Perioperative Services. He was previously chief of the Department of Anesthesiology at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan, and professor and chair of Anesthesiology at the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine. In 2018, Grant was elected as the 100th president of the American Society of Anesthesiologists.

**Irene Kim, MD**, has been promoted to co-director of the Comprehensive Transplant Center. Over the past six years since she joined Cedars-Sinai from Stanford, she has assumed a growing

portfolio of responsibilities, including leading the Paired Kidney Exchange Program for four years and directing the Abdominal Transplant Surgery Fellowship program for the past three years. Under her leadership, national interest in the training program has grown significantly. In January 2018, she was appointed surgical director of the Kidney Transplant Program.

**Asher Kimchi, MD**, received the Lifetime Achievement Award in Cardiovascular Science, Medicine and Surgery from the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, an organization he founded that promotes global sharing of research and education in heart health.

**Andrew Klein, MD, MBA**, began his term as the 2019 president of the International College of Surgeons, U.S. Section, on Jan. 1. One of his priorities will be to help underserved communities through the organization's global outreach efforts. Klein is the Esther and Mark Schulman Chair in Surgery and Transplantation Medicine.

**Jon Kobashigawa, MD**, received the 2018 Paul I. Terasaki Clinical Science Award from the American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics. The

award honors an individual, group or institution that has made significant contributions to the fields of clinical transplantation, histocompatibility and immunogenetics. Kobashigawa is the DSL/Thomas D. Gordon Chair in Heart Transplantation Medicine.

**Milton Little, MD**, was one of three orthopaedic surgeons to win the 2018 Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation's Young Investigator Award from the Western Orthopaedic Association. The award honors assistant professors and clinical instructors for their efforts to advance the science of orthopaedic surgery through research and mentorship. Little was recognized for his paper on using 3D virtual reality for pain control in orthopaedic patients.

**Patrick D. Lyden, MD**, received the American Stroke Association's 2019 William M. Feinberg Award for Excellence in Clinical Stroke to recognize his contributions to stroke research. He is the Carmen and Louis Warschaw Chair in Neurology.

**David R. Marshall, JD, DNP, RN**, has been appointed senior vice president and chief nursing executive. Most recently, he served as the system chief nursing and

patient care services executive for the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB Health), where he worked in nursing roles for 36 years. He holds National Healthcare Disaster certification and was instrumental in leading UTMB Health and the Gulf Coast region back from the devastation of 2008's Hurricane Ike. His many leadership roles include a 2017 appointment to a four-year term on the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Magnet Recognition Program. Marshall earned a doctor of nursing practice degree from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, and a law degree from South Texas College of Law Houston. Marshall succeeds **Linda Burnes Bolton, DrPh, RN, FAAN**, who is transitioning into the new role of chief health equity officer.

**Pamela Roberts, PhD**, received the Distinguished OT Program Alumni Award from Washington University School of Medicine's Program of Occupational Therapy. The award honored her for her work in shaping rehabilitation services, policies and practices in healthcare systems, and for her dedication to providing high-quality, data-driven services.



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Ruth and Lawrence Harvey Chair in Neuroscience.

"If we didn't recruit women into our program, we'd be missing half of the talent. My colleagues across the country see a similar trend." It's a trend that Cedars-Sinai continues to foster.

### *Meet the Residents*

#### **Julie Chan, MD, PhD**

Her father's death from a traumatic brain injury sparked Chan's "passion for studying neurosciences in hopes of discovering new ways to treat traumatic brain and spinal cord injury and prevent others from suffering his fate," she says.

Chan believes that neurosurgery's challenges are similar whether the doctor is male or female. "I find the central nervous system fascinating: It is the one organ system whose inner workings we know the least about, yet it is truly integral to who we are as individuals and can't be artificially replaced."

Her dedication was quickly spotted by Tiffany Perry, MD, assistant professor of Neurosurgery. "Her patients love her, even when she wakes them up early," she says. "I see a lot of me in Dr. Chan—she has nonstop energy."

Chan thinks it's remarkable that she gets to have such a visible impact on human life. "It's all about the patients and their families," she says. No matter how challenging the day or week has been, she sees those moments of connection as the greatest gifts.

#### **Angelique Do, MD**

When Do contemplated studying neurosurgery, she recognized its "boys' club" reputation and the time commitment required but determined she wouldn't be happy doing anything else. She says that being a woman probably contributes to the empathy she brings to

patient interactions.

"Women do pay particular attention to details, like those little hints patients give you when they talk to you," Do notes. "We are usually sensitive to important emotional needs, and sympathetic with patients. I remember a patient telling me during my morning rounds, 'You're always smiling at 4 a.m. You must really love your job.' And I do."

As Perry mentors Do and her fellow residents, she regards them as full-fledged colleagues rather than just as trainees. For example, Perry collaborated with Do on a paper about what she calls "an interesting but rare spinal cord tumor."

Like her colleagues, Do has earned her status in Perry's eyes. "If Dr. Do says she'll do something, you know it will be done in a timely manner because she's passionate about her work," Perry says. "She's also trustworthy, honest and has exceptional follow-through skills."

Do is well-aware that in some professional situations, empathetic traits such as caring and kindness must take a back seat to decisiveness and authority, lest she be labeled in a manner a male might not.

"When it's stressful, and there are lots of things coming at you, you may say something in an irritated kind of way, like anyone would, and be perceived as 'difficult,'" she says. Although she says she's never been treated differently than her male colleagues, she remains vigilant about her self-expression. "I just remember to check myself."

#### **Lindsey Ross, MD, Chief Resident**

Arriving at Cedars-Sinai in her early 20s as a Pauletta and Denzel Washington Family Gifted Scholar in Neuroscience inspired Ross to pursue the field of neurosurgery.

"When we created the program, we hoped it would attract and retain talented doctors," Pauletta Washington says. "It is now instrumental and successful in

identifying women such as Dr. Ross. I'm happy to know she and other women residents are shattering the glass ceiling."

Ross had considered surgical oncology or even a career in health policy before she found her home at Cedars-Sinai.

"That summer, one of my good friends was struck by a vehicle and suffered from traumatic brain injury and broken cervical spine," she says. "Daily, I woke up early to shadow Dr. Black, and in the evening sat in the intensive care unit with my friend and his family. When something like that happens in life, it's like you're being called in a certain direction."

Ross noticed few women in neurosurgery. "Then Dr. Black said, 'This is something you can do,' and it changed my career outlook," she says.

"With Dr. Ross, I see a great daughter, mom, humanitarian and neurosurgeon," says Perry, who performed spine surgeries—accomplished without the aid of imaging or routine instruments—alongside Ross on a medical mission in Uganda earlier this year. "It's been beautiful to watch her grow and transition to being so balanced in all her roles."

Ross says other female physician leaders have modeled polished professionalism. "Women in this specialty have to be very dedicated but also prepared when a patient asks, 'Are you here to clean the room?'" she says. "They don't do it with mal intent, and fortunately the culture is changing."

That change has unwavering support from both Black and Perry. "These women distinguish themselves extremely well, rise to the top and perform in an exemplary way as residents and faculty," Black says.

"In medicine now, patients shop for not only the phenomenal physician, but also someone to connect with and comfort them," Perry says. "It's who we are and what we do, and we're showing you can have it—and do it—all."