



Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society

Giving Back to the Program That Trained YOU!

Highlights

Founder of UNM Orthopaedics Passes Away after 92yrs

Remembering Drs. Dale Hoekstra & Elizabeth Szalay

Where are They Now: Gehron Treme, MD

SOAS Annual Alumni Reception at AAOS

Joel Lubin Visiting Professorship

45th Annual CTH Winter Conference

HAPPY NEW YEAR

2015



Dear Colleagues,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and that you are having a wonderful winter. As we start 2015, I want to take a few moments to reflect back on the past few months, which have been a very difficult and sad time for our family of

UNM Orthopaedics.

On November 3, 2014, Dr. Dale Hoekstra passed away in Albuquerque after complications surrounding a serious heart condition. Dr. Hoekstra was the medical director for Carrier Tingley Hospital and Associate Professor in pediatric orthopaedics for the Department. He joined UNM in 2007.

On November 20, 2014, Dr. George Omer passed away peacefully in Spring, Texas. Dr. Omer was the former President of the American Orthopaedic Association, former President of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand, our former Professor and first Chairman of Orthopaedics at UNM, as well as the first Chief of Hand Surgery at UNM and former Chief of Orthopedic Surgery and Hand Surgery at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. Dr. Omer joined UNM in 1970.

On December 29, 2014, we lost a third member of our family. Dr. Elizabeth Szalay passed away after a long battle with cancer. Dr. Szalay was the founder and director of the Carrie Tingley Pediatric Bone Health Center and Professor in pediatric orthopaedics for the Department. Dr. Szalay joined UNM in 2002.

I sincerely hope that 2015 brings health and happiness to us all.

Planned events for 2015: Our next alumni reception will be Friday, March 27, 2015 at the AAOS meeting in Las Vegas. The reception will be held at the Paris Hotel. Please make plans to attend.

On Wednesday, April 1, 2015, we will be hosting our 3rd annual Joel Lubin Memorial Professorship. The focus of the 2-day program remains directed towards topics related to life, stress, and relevant non-orthopaedic issues following completion of residency training. Our honored guests this year include Dr. Thomas Bien, who is a practicing psychologist and motivational speaker in Albuquerque, and Dr. Speight Grimes (class of 2004) from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

This summer, our 4th publication of *the University of New Mexico Orthopaedic Research Journal* will be released and sent to all of our alumni, affiliates of the Department, and every orthopaedic residency program in the country. Information and articles in this

year's journal will continue to include updates about the Department and original articles from residents, faculty, division of physical therapy and alumni.

Finally, I have enjoyed my term as co-founder and President of the Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society, but the time has come to hand my duties off to our next President. I am proud to have had the opportunity to work closely with our Alumni, Dr. Schenck, the Department faculty and residents, Ryan Wood, and Trent Dimas with UNM Foundation. Until SOAS, we did not have an alumni organization dedicated to the Department. Since our inception in 2008, and including contributions from the Sandia Circle, we have raised over \$175,000. Past, present, and ongoing SOAS programs for our Alumni, residents, and Department include the following:

- The annual Alumni reception (2008 – present) held each spring at the AAOS meeting.
- The Eric Thomas (class of 2004) Annual Memorial Golf Tournament (2011 – 2014) benefiting SOAS and The New Mexico Children's Cancer Fund.
- The Joel Lubin Memorial Visiting Professorship (2013 – present) to commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. Joel Lubin (class of 2001).
- Embroidered lab coats for the orthopaedic residents (2012 – present) and annual contributions to the residency program to assist with the purchasing of iPads, board fees, and surgical loops.
- Visiting professorships and cadaver labs.
- The University of New Mexico Orthopaedic Research Journal (2012- present).
- SOAS webpage and alumni map available through the Department website.
- The annual chief resident golf tournament and BBQ (2013 – present).

Please visit <http://orthopaedics.unm.edu/soas/join-soas.html> for additional information about SOAS, the Sandia Circle, the Joel Lubin Professorship fund, and the Department of Orthopaedics. We encourage you to get involved!

You can also call Ryan Wood at (505) 272-8745, should you have any questions about your 2015 dues, lifetime membership opportunities, or other upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Dean W. Smith
Class of 2000
SOAS President

First UNM Orthopaedics Chair Passes Away



Dr. George E. Omer

Former President of the American Orthopaedic Association, esteemed member and former President of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand, and former Professor and Chairman of the Department of Orthopaedics and Division of Hand Surgery at the University of New Mexico Medical Center, Dr. George E. Omer, Jr. passed away peacefully on November 20, 2014, in Spring, TX, surrounded by his family. Dr. Omer was born in 1922 in Kansas City, KS as the oldest child of Dr. George E. Omer, Sr. and Edith Mae Omer. He lived with his family in western Kansas during the 1930s and the worst years of the Great Depression. In the 1940s, he attended Ft. Hayes Kansas State University for his undergraduate studies and the University of Kansas Medical School for his graduate work, serving also as a non-commissioned surgical technician in the United States Army during World War II. Honorably discharged in 1945, he later rejoined the Army as a commissioned officer serving over 20 years in the Army Medical Corps and earning his Army Parachutist Badge and the American Legion of Merit Medal, among many other commendations and awards along the way. In 1949, he married Wanda (Wendie) Vilven, and they raised two sons, George Eric Omer and Michael Lee Omer, over the next two decades as Omer served at various medical posts throughout the country and South Korea as an Army surgeon. During the 1950s and

1960s, Omer's skill, experience, training and reputation in the field of hand surgery earned him national acclaim. Eventually, he assumed the position of Chief of Orthopedic Surgery and Hand Surgery at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio during the height of the Vietnam War. He retired from the Army in 1970 with the rank of Colonel and moved to Albuquerque to take the position of Chairman of the Department of Orthopaedics and Division of Hand Surgery at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. Over the next two decades, Omer's reputation in the medical community would continue to expand world wide, allowing him to serve in key rolls with numerous national and international medical societies while growing the size and reputation of the medical programs he initiated and fostered at UNM. During this period, Omer's writings and lectures extended his work and reputation to prestigious international academic medical organizations in Britain, France, Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey and Canada, to name a few, as well as to the most premier American medical societies and organizations for orthopaedics and hand surgery. In 1990, Omer retired as the Chairman and Chief of the UNM medical departments he founded and assumed the roll of Professor and Chairman Emeritus for the Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation at the UNM School of Medicine. In the 1990s, Omer continued his practice of medicine by lecturing, writing, consulting and serving on national and international advisory boards for numerous medical societies and publications. All the while he remained active as a physician, educator and consultant with organizations as varied and diverse as the Carrie Tingley Children's Hospital, NASA, the U.S. Surgeon General's Office, the Navajo Tribal Health Authority and the Houston Oilers Football Team.

Omer's legacy to medicine represents over a half century of selfless dedication and exemplary commitment to the improvement of the field of hand surgery and the education and training of countless doctors who now carry on his life's work as their own. He earned and cherished the friendships of colleagues all over the world who recognize him as a pioneer in the field of hand surgery and acknowledge that his skill, dedication, work ethic and integrity have set him apart from his peers. Omer was preceded in death by his older son, Eric, and is survived by his wife, Wendie, his sister, Betty Creek, his son, Michael, and daughter-in-law, Marla, his grandchildren Adria, Miranda, Tera, Cody, Macy and Greg, and his nephews and niece Doug and Jon Vilven, Robert (Bob) and David Creek, Sharyn Holt, and their spouses. He loved his family dearly and, after 65 years of marriage, considered the roles of Husband, Father, Grandfather, Brother and Uncle to be the most cherished of all his lifetime honors.

"Few people get to influence one's life, and I am thankful to have Dr. Omer help shape my career. A Giant in Orthopaedics."

Dennis Phelps, MD (Class of 1985)



Carrie Tingley Hospital & UNM Staff Mourn Losses



It is with great sadness that we share the Health Sciences Center's loss of **Dr. Dale Hoekstra**, who passed away on Monday, November 3, 2014. Dr. Hoekstra served as medical director for Carrie Tingley Hospital, specialized in pediatric orthopaedics and had been a practicing medical doctor for nearly 40 years. He spent much of his time selflessly teaching medical students and residents the skills necessary to become skilled and compassionate orthopaedic surgeons. In total, Dr. Hoekstra mentored and instructed some 40 residents and fellows at UNM.

Dr. Hoekstra joined us in 2007 and was "an amazing professor and hire," said Dr. Bob Schenck, Professor and Chair of the UNM Department of Orthopaedics who in 2014 nominated Dr. Hoekstra for UNM School of Medicine's coveted "Golden-Headed Cane Award" for faculty. "His leadership and sense of humor were wonderful gifts he brought to UNM Orthopaedics."

Dr. Hoekstra earned his MD at Wayne State and completed an internship and residency at William Beaumont Hospital in Michigan. He fulfilled a second residency in Pediatric

Orthopaedics at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. Additionally, he provided eight years of military service at USAF medical facilities nationwide as Chief of Pediatric Orthopaedics.

Dr. Hoekstra later served as Director of the Spinal Deformities Clinic at Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital. During his nearly 10 years there, he became active in the Scoliosis Research Society, Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America and American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. He also worked in private practice for 18 years as a Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon at Rochester Hills Orthopaedics, where a team approach to comprehensive orthopaedic and spine care is emphasized. He served as president and leader of his group.

Dr. Hoekstra joined the UNM School of Medicine in 2007 where he became a committed leader and sage advisor to faculty, residents, and medical students. "He was a respected didactic lecturer on Pediatric Orthopaedics and key contributor to the annual Carrie Tingley Hospital Annual Winter Conference," said Dr. Schenck. "He will remain in our memories as a wonderful husband, father, teacher, physician, colleague and friend. He gave so much to us at UNM and will be sincerely missed."



Dr. Elizabeth Szalay, passed away this past December with loved ones by her side after a two-year battle with cancer. She joined UNM Orthopaedics in 2002 after building an 18-year medical career that began as a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon for Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and later included orthopaedic surgery with Beaumont Bone & Joint Institute in Texas and Orthopaedic Associates of Northern New Mexico in Santa Fe. Along the way, she served as President of the New Mexico Orthopaedic Association, chaired committees for the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America, lectured worldwide and conducted research on pediatric osteoporosis/bone health, and was sought after as an internationally-certified clinical densitometrist. Dr. Szalay also organized an annual pediatric orthopaedic surgical mission to Guayaquil, Ecuador.

A local chapter of the Association of Women Surgeons (AWS), founded in 1981, was launched in 2014 and honors Dr. Szalay's career and contributions to women in medi-

cine. "She was one of the first female orthopaedic surgeons and opened many doors for others who followed in her footsteps," says Dr. Selina Silva a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon at the Carrie Tingley Hospital. "She also helped dispel the common impression of women surgeons not wanting to work hard or produce as much as our male counterparts and served as an inspiration to many,"

Dr. Szalay was recent nominated and awarded the 2015 Humanitarian Award by the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America for her surgical missions to Ecuador as well as her work with the local Native American community in New Mexico.

"We will never forget her strength and fortitude over the last 2 years during her battle with cancer. She will be dearly missed, and her spirit will always be with us," says Dr. Robert Schenck.

Dr. Szalay is survived by her loving husband, Ken Gilman, and our condolences go out to him and their family.

Where are They Now: Gehron Treme, MD



Each quarter, we select an alumnus from the University of New Mexico (UNM) Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation to highlight in our Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society (SOAS) newsletter's "Where Are They Now?" column. In this issue, we proudly spotlight Sandia Circle member **Gehron P. Treme, MD, Class of 2006**.

Southern charm and a strong work ethic strike a fine balance in Dr. Gehron Treme. They are unquestionably what make him a dedicated Sports Medicine physician, an effective Assistant Professor and a popular Residency Program Director for the University of New Mexico's Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation.

Since graduating Summa Cum Laude from Louisiana State University with a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science, Gehron has gone on to fulfill an Orthopaedic Surgery Residency here at UNM and an Orthopaedic Sports Medicine Fellowship at the University of Virginia where he served as an Associate Team Physician for UVA athletic teams.

Gehron joined UNM's Division of Sports Medicine in 2009 where he serves as a Team Physician for Lobo sports. He is also a Team Physician for Rio Rancho High School. Since 2012, Gehron has been Director of the UNM Orthopaedic Residency Program which received more than 500 applications for its 2014-15 term. "This is the highest level of academically qualified resident applications we've ever seen," he remarked when PGY1 selectees were named last April.

An effective communicator and friendly colleague, Gehron earned "Faculty Instructor of the Year" accolades in 2012 from UNM and received an *Outstanding Educator Award* in 2014 from the University's Office of Graduate Medical Education based on nominations from residents and faculty alike. Those who know Gehron personally might say he takes after his role-model grandmother, whom he fondly describes as "so quietly kind to other people" and "morally consistent."

The devoted husband and father of two young boys enjoys cooking, gardening, hiking and skiing in his personal time as well as "asking [Dr. Thomas] DeCoster questions to my children at dinnertime." He's also a fan of John Updike novels and Quentin Tarentino films (*Pulp Fiction* being his all-time favorite).

When asked what he loves most about his job, Gehron does not hesitate a beat when he says: "Having the opportunity to watch talented people make the most of their abilities." Similarly, Gehron is a proud Sandia Circle member. "Support and stewardship of our alumni program allow the greatest effect on patient care and resident training that one person can have," he asserts.

Thank you, Gehron, for your valued support of UNM's Orthopaedic Residency Program.



9th Annual SOAS Alumni Reception

Friday, March 27 6:30pm - 9:00 pm

Paris Hotel

3655 S Las Vegas Blvd.

Las Vegas, NV 89109

The Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society cordially invites you to attend the 9th Annual SOAS Alumni Reception held during the AAOS Annual Meeting. Enjoy an evening of reconnecting with old friends, and meeting new faculty and current UNM Orthopaedic Residents.

RSVP to:

rwood03@unm.edu



3rd Annual Joel Lubin Visiting Professorship

The University of New Mexico Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation and Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society established the Joel Lubin Visiting Professorship in 2013 through the UNM Foundation. The professorship honors the memory of Dr. Joel Lubin, UNM Orthopaedic Class of 2001, who was considered by his colleagues to be an outstanding surgeon, friend, and father.

Annually, the professorship enables us to spotlight a renowned orthopaedic specialist at Grand Rounds followed by a day with former UNM Orthopaedic alums for current orthopaedic residents which enhances their UNM experience and provides valuable life lesson outside of orthopaedic practice. To sustain this worthwhile professorship, our annual fundraising goal of \$5,000 depends on generous support from alumni and friends. To make a contribution, please email Development Coordinator Ryan Wood at rwood03@salud.unm.edu or call 505-272-8745. You can also contribute online at <http://orthopaedics.unm.edu/soas/lubin-fund.html>.

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

7:30 a.m.

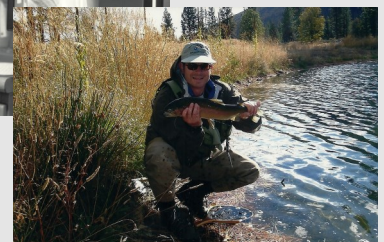
UNM Hospital 2ACC Learning Center

Honored Guest Speakers:

Thomas Bien, PhD

Bourck Cashmore, MD (Class of 1997)

Speight (Jerry) Grimes, MD (Class of 2004)





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 SCHOOL of MEDICINE & REHABILITATION



*45th Annual Carrie Tingley
 Hospital Winter Conference*
Topic: Pediatric Trauma
Date: Friday, January 30, 2015
Time: 7:30 a.m. (Registration) - 5 p.m.
**Place: UNM Domenici Center for
 Health Sciences Education**
**Register at: [http://som.unm.edu/cme/
 calendar2015.html](http://som.unm.edu/cme/calendar2015.html)**
Email: rw00d03@salud.unm.edu

Sandia Circle Lifetime Membership

Join the Sandia Circle today by committing a pledge of \$25,000 over 5 years (\$416/month) to help current UNM Orthopaedic residents with financial burdens and better their experience in the same program that trained you.



Deana Mercer ♦ Gehrion Tremp ♦ Joseph Newcomer ♦ Thomas Ferro ♦ Joseph Ferro ♦ John Franco ♦ Kevin McGee ♦ Robert Schenck, Jr. ♦ John Franco ♦ Kevin McGee ♦ Robert Schenck, Jr. ♦ Jennifer FitzPatrick ♦ Dean Smith ♦ Brian Robinson ♦ Sanagaram Shantharam ♦

For more information, or to join, please contact Ryan Wood at 505-272-8745 or rw00d03@salud.unm.edu.