



# Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society

*Giving Back to the Program That Trained YOU!*

## Highlights

**Alumni and Former Faculty Member Dr. John Veitch Passes Away**

**Dr. Selina Silva Helps to Start Local Chapter of the AWS**

**Where Are They Now: Dr. Eric Benson**

**Incoming and Outgoing Residents**

**34th Annual Alumni Conference**



Big shoes to fill! As I embark on tenure as Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society (SOAS) President, my first order of business is to recognize our former president and founding father Dean Smith. Dean defines what it means to be an alumnus of any institution.

I had the good fortune of working with Dean during my orthopaedic residency at UNM. During the two years we overlapped in the program, I witnessed first-hand Dean's drive, intensity, and dedication.

The prototypical Dr. Moheb Moneim resident (not solely because he chose hand surgery as a specialty), Dean led by example. Always dependable, tenaciously dedicated to educating his junior residents, and setting the bar for orthopaedic patient care, Dean embodied what it meant to be a UNM orthopaedic resident. I'm sure Dr. Moneim would have been content to clone five Deans every year!

After leaving the University for fellowship and ultimately practicing in Houston, Dean did not forget the program that took a shot on him as a graduating medical student. With the help of fellow alumni Paul Echols and assistance from Mark Crawford, Dean founded the SOAS in 2006 cultivating a \$60,000 NuVasive® donation in memory of our friend and co-resident Eric Thomas. Soon after, in 2007, the first UNM Alumni Reception was organized at the AAOS annual meeting. Under Dean's direction, this annual event has become a fantastic way for alumni to reconnect with the program and interact with current residents.

Dean has focused his presidency on raising funds for residency financial needs—both anticipated and unanticipated. The SOAS has supported resident education through the purchase of iPads for EMR use and has funded board exam fees for PGY-5s, lab coats for incoming interns and current residents, board exam prep books and fees associated with educational conferences and travel expenses.

When one of our most highly regarded alumni Joel Lubin lost his battle with stress and depression, Dean was quick to direct SOAS in organizing the annual *Joel Lubin Memorial Professorship* to raise resident awareness of the social rigors of orthopaedic practice and provide life skills for dealing with the day-to-day strain we all experience. In addition, Dean enlisted the help of Tom DeCoster and Mark Crawford to establish the *Eric Thomas Memorial Golf Tournament* which, to date, has raised \$65,000 for SOAS and resident education.

Proving to not only talk the fundraising talk but also walk the walk, Dean is one of the original members of the Sandia Circle—a lifetime SOAS membership conceived by Bob Schenck. Several others have pledged the \$25,000 to the Sandia Circle following Dean's lead as SOAS President in an effort to fully vest SOAS.

As Dean takes a well-deserved reprieve from the responsibilities of SOAS President, please join me in congratulating him for a job done exceedingly well. Nice work, Dean. Big shoes to fill, indeed!

**John C. Franco, MD**  
**Class of 2003**  
**SOAS President**

## Dr. John “Papa” Veitch (Class of 1978 & Former Faculty) Passes Away

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**Dr. John Veitch**

We are saddened to inform the UNM Orthopaedic family that Dr. John Veitch passed away the afternoon of Sunday, January 18, 2015 at the age of 70. He was surrounded by his loving family; wife Mary Ellen, Andy, Beth, and Charlie Veitch. Dr. John Veitch, in my estimation, exemplified a true professional equal only to his life as a loving husband and wonderful family man. Dr. John Veitch was born and raised in North Dakota, and eventually came to New Mexico for his Orthopaedic training, graduating in 1978. Settling into practice in Roswell, New Mexico, John began a very fruitful orthopaedic career, while simultaneously starting a family with Mary Ellen. Andy and Charlie were raised as native New Mexicans, and over the years they have shared such fond memories of that time.

Thereafter, John and Mary Ellen moved to Missouri for a successful hand surgery practice until we were able to welcome him back to the Department in 2003 as a very productive faculty member. I will never forget working alongside “Papa Veitch” in faculty clinic watching his calm demeanor, and scrubbing with him during an ulnar nerve transposition during which his abilities as a superb teacher were exemplified. It was appropriate that John was named Outstanding Teacher for UNM Orthopaedic Surgery shortly after his arrival.

We are all in disbelief learning of this sudden loss of a very wonderful surgeon and colleague, a loving husband, father, and doting grandfather. Our prayers, thoughts, and deepest sympathy are with the Veitch family.

Mary Ellen asked that in lieu of flowers, donations could be made as desired, to the Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society in Dr. John Veitch’s name.

—**Robert (Bob) Schenck, Jr., MD Professor and Chairman**

A recent donation by Dr. John Veitch’s brother, Tom, Tom’s wife, Gayle, and son Ian Veitch was received to make John Veitch a perpetual member of the Sandia Circle of the SOAS.

*“When John retired several years ago, he was missed by all the faculty on the Hand Service, the fellows and the residents. His vast knowledge in all areas of hand surgery was unique as he combined both academic and private practice that he acquired for many years. He was a true gentleman, an excellent surgeon and teacher. His patients loved and respected him and appreciated his help in restoring their hand function. He will surely be missed by all of us.”* — **Moheb Moneim, MD Professor and Chairman Emeritus**

*“I honestly never heard anything but good feedback and memories about Papa Veitch. To this day I still think of him during hand cases. Also I am reminded of him when I eat a PBJ (peanut butter and jelly sandwich) and think of his daily packed lunch! He was a great asset to the department and a joy to work with. He will be deeply missed by all the residents. Our prayers go out to him and his family.”* — **Brook Adams, Class of 2011**



## UNM Orthopaedics Helps to Launch Chapter of Association of Women Surgeons



**Selina Silva, MD**

Two surgeons at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center have launched a local chapter of the Association of Women Surgeons, an international group dedicated to the support and promotion of women in the surgical field of medicine. Drs. Selina Silva (UNM Orthopaedic faculty and alumni) and Cynthia Reyes started the local chapter in memory of the late Dr. Elizabeth Szalay, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon and UNM professor who died in December.

"We felt that with the increased number of female surgeons at the institution, we should form this chapter,"

Silva said. "We also wanted to acknowledge former colleague Dr. Elizabeth Szalay as being one of the first female orthopedic surgeons who has opened many doors for women in surgery."

Silva went on to say, "Szalay was one of the reasons I went into pediatrics in the first place. We were able to have her come to our first meeting and recognize that she was the inspiration for creating the chapter. She was one of the initial trailblazers [as a woman in the field], she did it when it was not easy ... We knew that Szalay wasn't doing well from a medical perspective, so we wanted to get it going as quickly as possible." (Szalay was a longtime professor of orthopedic surgery and pediatrics at UNM and was the head of pediatric orthopedic surgery at UNM's Carrie Tingley Hospital. She died in December at 61.)



**In Memoriam: 1953-2014  
Elizabeth Szalay, MD**

The Albuquerque branch of the group includes 20 female attending physicians and residents from the university's orthopedics, surgery, neurosurgery, and ear, nose and throat departments. At the group's first annual meeting last summer, about 14 people attended, including female surgeons from other area hospitals and Szalay. Although individual duties and titles have not yet been established, Silva says she and Reyes are the founders and will oversee the chapter's efforts. Silva has been on staff as a pediatric orthopedic surgeon at the Carrie Tingley Hospital division of UNM since 2011, serves as an assistant professor in the orthopedics department and is the interim medical director of the Carrie Tingley Hospital. Reyes is a pediatric surgeon and professor in the surgery department at UNM.

The Association of Women Surgeons was founded in 1981 by Dr. Patricia Numann as part of the American College of Surgeons' fall meeting that year. Incorporated in 1986, the organization has grown to include 1,400 members from 15 countries worldwide, including Australia, Beirut and Japan. Beyond providing support and a platform for discussion of issues facing women in the surgical field, AWS established a research fellowship program and foundation in the 1990s that awards annual grant money to female surgeons for original surgical research.

[Reported from *Albuquerque Business First*, 2/3/2015.]

## Where are They Now: Eric Benson, MD

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**Eric Benson, 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 **Eric Charles Benson, MD, Class of 2007.***

He's traversed a continent to arrive at where he is today. But, then again, Dr. Eric Benson has always had a love of travel.

An East coast transplant to New Mexico, Eric earned a Bachelor of Arts in English with a *Certificate in Environmental Studies* at Princeton University in New Jersey before heading southward for a Master's of Science in physiology and bio physics at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. At that juncture, gaining a Doctor of Medicine degree became Eric's directional goal—one he also earned at Georgetown.

A southwesterly move to Albuquerque let Eric fulfill an Orthopaedic Surgery Residency next with the University of New Mexico's (UNM) Orthopaedics Department. Then he chartered a northeast course to Canada for a year-long Shoulder, Elbow and Hand Fellowship at the University of Western Ontario's Hand and Upper Limb Centre before dropping anchor back in Albuquerque with his wife and two daughters.

Today Eric is an Assistant Professor for UNM Orthopaedics' Division of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery. A penchant for leadership also finds Eric serving as Medical Director of Outpatient Orthopaedic Clinics for UNM Hospitals and on the board of New Mexico Orthopaedic Association, which has benefited from his past presidency.

Striking balance between work, community service and family life is important to Eric. He credits both his parents and grandparents "for setting the consistent example of loving family, working hard, setting high standards and doing the right thing." From volunteering at Roadrunner Food Bank with his oldest daughter to supporting United Way of Central New Mexico as a member of its Tocqueville Society, Eric is all about giving time to others. He is also a staunch supporter of UNM Orthopaedics alumni as evidenced by his chairing of the department's annual Alumni Conference since 2009.

Downtime gets Eric's thirst for travel quenched with family getaways like a recent one to Disneyland and planned a trip to France and Italy this summer. When physical travel isn't possible, Eric escapes mentally by reading historical novels such as his current pick: *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. "I'll let you know if I finish it before I'm 80!" he jokes.

When asked what the best part of his job is, Eric unequivocally states that it's "working with the residents and fellows" in UNM Orthopaedics who help keep him focused. And when life has its anxious moments, Eric simply recalls his favorite quote by Robert M. Pirsig, author of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values*:

"Sometimes it's a little better to travel than to arrive."

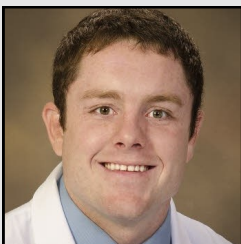
## Incoming and Outgoing Residents

### Intern Residents



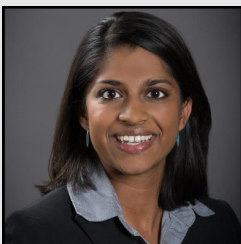
**Paul Goodwyn**

**Medical School:** State University of New York Upstate Medical University



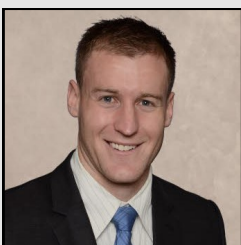
**Travis Hughes**

**Medical School:** University of Arizona



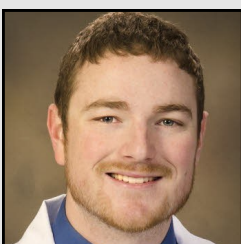
**Aditi Majumdar**

**Medical School:** University of New Mexico



**Andrew Parsons**

**Medical School:** University of Oklahoma



**Christopher Schultz**

**Medical School:** University of Arizona

### Chief Residents



**Scott Evans, MD**

**Hometown:** Salt Lake City, UT  
**Medical School:** Medical College of Wisconsin  
**Fellowship:** Hand - University of Virginia



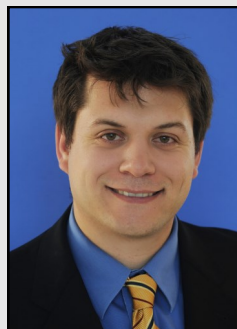
**Sean Keuhn, MD**

**Hometown:** Madison, WI  
**Medical School:** University of Wisconsin  
**Fellowship:** Trauma - Campbell Clinic



**Dustin Ritcher, MD**

**Hometown:** Albuquerque, NM  
**Medical School:** University of New Mexico  
**Fellowship:** Sports - University of Virginia



**Greg Strohmeier, MD**

**Hometown:** Palmer, AK  
**Medical School:** Northwestern University  
**Fellowship:** Trauma - Orthopaedic Trauma Surgeons of Northern California



**Heather Woodin, MD**

**Hometown:** Tucson, AZ  
**Medical School:** University of Arizona  
**Fellowship:** Trauma - Sonoran Orthopaedic Trauma



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University of New Mexico  
 Domenici Center for  
 Health Sciences Education  
 Friday, June 5, 2015  
**Foot & Ankle Update**

**34th Annual  
 UNM Orthopaedic Alumni Conference**



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.



For more information, or to join, please contact Ryan Wood at 505-272-8745 or [wood03@salud.unm.edu](mailto:wood03@salud.unm.edu).

**Sandia Circle Lifetime Membership**