



UCLA UROLOGY

UPDATE



Left: The annual UCLA Urology Resident Retreat is among the many events and responsibilities under the purview of the department’s medical education team. Right: The team, front row (l. to r.): Karla Torrento, fellowship coordinator; Sydney Nguyen, residency program specialist; Ashley Leung, events coordinator; Kristy Fong, education director; back row (l. to r.): Carol Evans, senior residency coordinator; Janelle Lopez, executive clerkship coordinator; Giselle Garcia, didactics and reporting coordinator; Delilah Salazar, medical student coordinator; and Valeria Montoya Ramirez, senior fellowship coordinator.

Medical Education Team Enables UCLA Urology Trainees to Thrive

Although UCLA Urology’s state-of-the-art patient care and groundbreaking research tends to receive the most public attention, nothing is more important to the department’s mission than the education and training of medical students, residents, and fellows.

“Preparing the next generation of academic and clinical urologists is central to our mission,” says Jennifer Singer, MD, UCLA Urology professor of clinical urology and the Peter Starrett Chair in Medical Education. “We are highly motivated to produce the best-trained urologists, knowing that these individuals will serve as our legacy through their outstanding patient care and research, as well as through the education and mentorship they will provide to the trainees who follow them.”

Dr. Singer, who completed medical school and

residency at UCLA along with fellowships at Texas Children’s Hospital/Baylor School of Medicine and UCLA before she joined the UCLA Urology faculty, says she and her colleagues view the teaching and mentorship of trainees as both critically important and highly fulfilling — an ethos, she says, that has been emphasized by the department’s leadership, including by the current chair, Dr. Mark S. Litwin. And implementing that aspect of the mission, Dr. Singer notes, is possible through both the philanthropy that has been

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critical to the mission and the department's medical education team. "The Med-Ed team is a highly effective group of people who do an amazing job in attending to all of the details that ensure our trainees have the best possible experience," Dr. Singer says.

The medical education team currently consists of nine members with responsibility for three departments: Urology, Obstetrics & Gynecology, and Head & Neck Surgery. "Trainees represent the future, and our faculty are committed to giving them the best experience," says Kristy Fong, who serves as the team's director. "But these faculty members are very busy, and need a team behind them to ensure the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed. We see ourselves as an important cog in the wheel — working behind the scenes to keep things running."

The team's responsibilities are wide-ranging. As Fong describes it: "We are the essential support system, making sure schedules are completed, events are planned, and educational requirements are met

while our trainees navigate their educational journey." For example, coordinators handle day-to-day administrative tasks of the residency and fellowship programs, including documentation and communication. They ensure that the program meets all mandates set by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and other regulatory bodies. They organize educational activities, orientations, graduation ceremonies, and other program-related events, as well as planning and coordinating weekly conference schedules and advising trainees on concerns



and resources available to them. In addition to residents and fellows, the team's purview includes UCLA medical students, ranging from the urology rotations of second-year students to the fourth-year sub-interns who are considering applying to the residency program.

"We are bustling," Fong says. "Everyone on the team has specific roles, but we are all cross-trained, have shared inboxes, and work together to anticipate needs and make sure everything gets done."

As the team's events coordinator, Ashley Leung manages UCLA Urology activities that include the annual retreat for residents and faculty; the three-day, continuing medical education-accredited State-of-the-Art conference, held each year for urologists and other health care professionals around the country; Joseph J. Kaufman Visiting Professor Day, which brings in an esteemed urologist from another institution for a three-day visit and keynote lecture, with UCLA Urology fellows and residents presenting their work and leading case-based debates at an all-day symposium; and the ceremony and reception for graduating residents.

Between the annual and recurring events, Leung attends to the itineraries of distinguished visitors from other institutions around the country and abroad, as well as managing major programs — including, notably, the 99th annual meeting of the Clinical Society of Genitourinary Surgeons (CSGUS). The prestigious organization is comprised of urology chairs from the nation's most esteemed institutions, which rotate in hosting the annual four-day conference where members share ideas, socialize, and collaborate to further urology practice, teaching, and research. With UCLA hosting the meeting in 2023, Leung planned events at Sony Pictures Studios, the Getty Museum, and the Skirball Cultural Center, as well

Photos on this page: The annual UCLA Urology Resident Retreat, organized by the department's medical education team, was held in November at American Jewish University's Brandeis-Bardin Campus.

as at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center and UCLA's Luskin Conference Center.

"It was a wonderful opportunity for us to host CSGUS," Leung says. "There were a lot of moving parts and behind-the-scenes details to take care of to make sure everything went smoothly, but it's very satisfying to plan an event and see it come to fruition, with everyone enjoying themselves and excited to be there."

Carol Evans, the medical education team's senior residency coordinator, likens the quiet efforts of the team in ensuring that trainees receive the support that enables them to thrive to behind-

are consistently responsive and help us navigate everything from onboarding to scheduling to education," says André Belarmino, MD, a sixth-year resident. "They've been our reliable go-to for all logistical and admin issues and have made our residency experience smooth. It's been great having such a caring team that really takes pride in helping us navigate this often-stressful part of our lives."

"The medical education team makes the program run seamlessly," adds Thomas Gaither, MD, MAS, who completed his UCLA Urology residency in 2024 and has stayed on for a fellowship in health services research. "There is so much that needs to be coordinated,



Photos on this page: The 2024 UCLA Urology Resident Graduation was held in June at the Skirball Cultural Center, organized by the department's medical education team.

the-scenes magic. "From coordinating schedules and facilitating research opportunities to maintaining compliance with ACGME standards, our team is dedicated to creating an environment that fosters professional growth," Evans says. "What I enjoy most about my role is seeing the residents develop and succeed throughout their training, knowing that we've contributed to their journey in a positive way. Working alongside a team that is equally passionate about resident education makes this role incredibly rewarding."

While the team's efforts aren't always visible to outsiders, they don't go unnoticed by UCLA Urology trainees. "Carol and her team

including in-service exams, accreditation and compliance, scheduling rotations, call scheduling, and planning events. They do an excellent job making the program flow consistently, and are always available to assist with questions or concerns."

For Kristy Fong and the members of her team, witnessing the growth of the UCLA Urology trainees they support — in some cases, from the time they were medical students through residency, fellowship, and beyond — makes it all worthwhile. "To see them flourish and know we were part of that is both humbling and fulfilling," she says. "That's the most rewarding part of this job."

Adam Kinnaird, MD, PhD, FRCSC



As the Frank and Carla Sojonyk Chair in Prostate Cancer Research at the University of Alberta in Canada, Dr. Adam Kinnaird has built a state-of-the-art prostate cancer diagnostic and treatment program that closely mirrors the pioneering program of the UCLA Urology professor Dr. Kinnaird trained under, Dr. Leonard S. Marks.

After completing his UCLA Urology fellowship, which focused on advanced imaging, targeted biopsy, and focal therapy for prostate cancer, Dr. Kinnaird returned to the University of Alberta in 2020 to start a program in targeted biopsy along with Western Canada's first program in focal therapy — a minimally invasive treatment that uses energy to target the cancer while leaving healthy tissue intact. "UCLA springboarded me forward to be able to study things that are at the forefront of prostate cancer care," Dr. Kinnaird says. "My success with national and international funding is directly attributable to my UCLA connections."

In the four years since he completed his training, Dr. Kinnaird has received approximately \$7 million in funding as a principal or co-principal investigator, and has published nearly two dozen papers in peer-reviewed journals. Recently, he was one of four early-career Canadian clinician-scientists to receive a 2024 Clinician-Scientist Award from the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network, which will support Dr. Kinnaird's work aiming to use advanced imaging, genomic sequencing, and targeted biopsy to better predict prostate cancer progression during active surveillance.

In these and other efforts, Dr. Kinnaird continues to collaborate with UCLA Urology faculty. He sends patient samples to Dr. Paul Boutros, UCLA professor of urology and human genetics, for sequencing on several projects — including the first involving indigenous Canadian men, part of an effort to determine why this traditionally marginalized population may be susceptible to more aggressive forms of prostate cancer. Dr. Kinnaird is also collaborating with Dr. Wayne Brisbane, UCLA Urology assistant professor, on two major clinical trials comparing micro-ultrasound with MRI for prostate cancer diagnosis.

Dr. Kinnaird also speaks regularly with Dr. Marks, whom he continues to regard as a mentor. "The great thing about the fellowship was that you become like his apprentice, and by the end of the first year you are helping to run his practice," Dr. Kinnaird says. "I have tried to create a similar program at the University of Alberta. What's so rewarding is that most of my patients are part of clinical trials, which means that at the same time we are providing high-level care, we are helping to advance care for the next generation of patients. And now I get to be a mentor and pass along what I have learned after experiencing such great mentorship under Dr. Marks."

Improved Imaging for Kidney Cancer

Each year, more than 81,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with kidney cancer. The most common and deadly form is clear-cell renal cell carcinoma, which accounts for three-fourths of cases and 90% of kidney cancer deaths. When kidney cancer is diagnosed late, it significantly reduces the odds of survival. On the other hand, when caught early, the five-year survival rate is above 90%. Unfortunately, traditional methods for early kidney cancer detection, including CT and MRI imaging, are often unable to differentiate between benign and malignant tumors. This has led to either unnecessary surgeries or delayed treatment of advanced disease.

In October, a research team led by UCLA Urology's Dr. Brian Shuch, director of the Kidney Cancer Program and the Alvin & Carrie Meinhardt Endowed Chair in Kidney Cancer Research, and Dr. Allan Pantuck, UCLA Urology professor and vice chair of academic affairs, found that a new, non-invasive imaging technique can accurately detect clear-cell renal cell carcinoma, providing confirmation of a kidney cancer diagnosis and better determining whether it is the more aggressive form.

In a phase 3 clinical trial, patients were injected with a drug called 89Zr-TLX250, which targets the CA9 protein. CA9 is highly expressed in up to 95% of clear cell kidney cancers, with minimal expression in normal tissue. A few days after the injection, patients received a PET-CT scan to detect the radioactive part of the drug, which lights up on the scan wherever the protein is present. By looking at the scan, doctors can determine if the kidney mass is likely to be cancerous based on whether the 89Zr-TLX250 has attached to the cancer cells. The new imaging method identified the presence of cancer in most cases while minimizing false positives — suggesting the potential for greatly improving the ability of kidney cancer physicians to accurately detect clear-cell renal cell carcinoma early, and for ensuring that more patients receive the right treatment at the right time.

This new imaging technique is currently under review for FDA approval, but UCLA continues to offer it to patients through an expanded-access clinical trial to determine if clear-cell renal cell carcinoma is present in the kidney, as well as via a study to determine whether the technique can effectively detect recurrent disease outside of the kidney following surgery.

For more information, visit www.uclaurology.com. To make an appointment, call (310) 794-7700.



Letter from the Chair



In the early days of medical education, newly minted MDs trained under a single physician or surgeon until that master teacher decided the student was ready for independence, at which point they were certified to practice on their own. That changed in the early 20th century following a landmark report that called for medical education to be standardized at all levels — from medical school to residency and fellowship — and for certifying groups to oversee the administration of these standards. This led to dramatic improvements in how physicians were prepared, with resulting advances in the quality of patient care.

In recent years, medical education has grown by leaps and bounds, with many academic physicians now viewing the training of the next generation and the honing of standards for medical student and resident teaching as their top priority, even ahead of scholarship. And to fuel this growth, we increasingly rely on professionally trained medical education administrators, who are intimately involved in everything from scheduling and managing training and event logistics to ensuring compliance with educational requirements and supporting trainees through the rigorous process.

Our cover story this issue highlights the work of UCLA Urology's Medical Education team — a highly dedicated group of professionals whose behind-the-scenes efforts have made it possible for our department's educational enterprise to flourish. Under the leadership of Kristy Fong, this team is as meticulous and precise in their work as our surgeons are in the OR — and that precision has allowed our department to greatly enhance the educational offerings that prepare tomorrow's urology leaders. But beyond the attention to administrative detail, the medical education team has become an indispensable resource for faculty teachers when they plan educational activities, as well as for our trainees — through the information and resources they provide, the bonds they develop, and the nurturing they offer during what can be a stressful chapter in these trainees' lives.

For those of us who chose to practice urology in an academic setting, teaching and mentoring medical students, residents, and fellows is at or near the top of the list of the most gratifying aspects of our work. Nothing is more important to our mission as a department than preparing future urology leaders. We are immensely proud of our record on that front, and our success would not be achievable without our outstanding medical education team.

❖ **Mark S. Litwin, MD, MPH**

Distinguished Professor and Chair, UCLA Urology

The medical education team has become an indispensable resource for faculty teachers.

Kudos

A. Lenore Ackerman, MD, UCLA Urology associate professor, and her co-investigators **Drs. Lynn Stothers, Renea Sturm**, and **Nicholas Jackson**, received a \$1,557,266 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense for “Elucidating the Molecular Pathways by Which Proinflammatory Microbes Induce the Development of Interstitial Cystitis.” Dr. Ackerman and co-investigators **Drs. Lynn Stothers, Michele Torosis**, and **Jeffrey Chiang** received a \$1,516,765 grant from the National Institutes of Health, National Center for Complementary & Integrative Health, for “Quantitative Assessment of Pelvic Floor Muscle Fitness in Myofascial Pelvic Pain.”

Juan José Andino, MD, MBA, UCLA Urology assistant clinical professor, was named a Gold Star Journal reviewer for the *Urology Gold Journal*. Dr. Andino was also interviewed on Univision regarding National Latino Physician Day. Dr. Andino and **Jesse N. Mills, MD**, UCLA Urology clinical professor, served as reviewers for “Insights on AUA’s Updated Guidelines for Male Infertility, Better Edge: A Northwestern Medicine Podcast for Physicians,” available on Apple Podcasts. In it, Robert E. Brannigan, MD, expanded on the American Urological Association and American Society for Reproductive Medicine’s 2024 amendment to the male infertility guideline.

Arnold Chin, MD, PhD, UCLA Urology professor, and co-authors **Dr. Hanwei Zhang, Ann Ly, Emily Chou, Liang Wang, Paul Zhang, Dr. Kris Prado, Yiqian Gu**, and **Matteo Pellegrini**, had their manuscript, “Role of Forkhead Box P3 in Interferon gamma-mediated PD-L1 Expression and Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition,” published in *Cancer Research Communications*. This manuscript describes the intrinsic role of the transcription factor FOXP3 expressed in regulating immune resistance and

cancer metastasis. Dr. Chin’s current work on this project focuses on developing therapeutic strategies to target FOXP3 in vivo.

Aboubacar Kaba, MD, UCLA Urology resident, and co-authors **Drs. Peter Muraki, Nicholas Donin, Vinicius Ludwig, Adrien Holzgreve, Johannes Czernin, Jeremie Calais, Lena Unterrainer**, and **Brian Shuch**, presented their abstract, “^{99m}Tc-Sestamibi SPECT/CT for the Characterization of Solid Renal Masses: Secondary Endpoint Analysis of a Prospective Study Correlating Imaging to Histopathology Results,” at the International Kidney Cancer Symposium annual meeting in November in Louisville, Kentucky.

Nima Nassiri, MD, UCLA Urology health sciences assistant clinical professor, received an \$80,000 grant from the American Urological Association Foundation, Inc., in support of “Feasibility of Protocols for Immunological Tolerance and Immunosuppression Withdrawal in Bladder Transplantation.”

Gladys Ng, MD, MPH, UCLA Urology associate clinical professor, and co-authors **Ethan Manafi** and **Dr. Andrew Zilavy**, had their abstract, “An Updated History of Metoidioplasty Surgical Technique,” accepted for presentation at the World Professional Association for Transgender Health Conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

Victor Nitti, MD, UCLA professor of urology and obstetrics & gynecology and chief of urogynecology and reconstructive pelvic surgery, had three manuscripts published in the journal *Neurology and Urodynamics*: “Bladder outlet obstruction in women: Advanced evaluation in Neurourology,” co-authored by **Dr. Patrick Lec**; “Melatonin and melatonin receptor agonists in the treatment of nocturia: A systematic review,” co-authored by **Drs. Christine Burke** and

Lynn Stothers; and “Efficacy and safety of onabotulinumtoxinA for the treatment of overactive bladder in men and women: A pooled analysis.” Dr. Nitti, along with co-authors **Drs. Michelle Torosis, Morgan Fullerton, Daniela Kaefer, A. Lenore Ackerman**, and **Tamara Grisales**, had their manuscript, “Pudendal block at the time of transvaginal prolapse repair: A randomized controlled trial” published in *Urogynecology*. He also had a manuscript published in *Nature Reviews Urology* with co-authors **Drs. Nima Nassiri, Lauren Schafrank, Michael Chen**, and **Madeleine Burg**, “Electrical stimulation for the hypocontractile bladder.”

Robert E. Reiter, MD, UCLA Urology professor and director of the Prostate Cancer Program, and co-authors **Drs. Adam Weiner, Raag Agrawal, Luca Valle, Ida Sonni, Amar Kishan, Matthew Rettig, Steven Raman, Jeremie Calais**, and **Paul Boutros**, had their manuscript, “Impact of PSMA PET on prostate cancer management,” published in the journal *Current Treatment Options in Oncology*. The manuscript discusses the benefits of PSMA-PET as a practice-changing imaging biomarker for the management of men with prostate cancer.

Heather Rosett, MD, fellow in urogynecology and reconstructive pelvic surgery, received the 2024 Linda Brubaker Prize Paper Award for her article “Association between genital hiatus size 8 weeks postpartum and pelvic organ prolapse 1 year after the first vaginal delivery,” which appeared in *Urogynecology*. The award is in recognition of the highest-quality original research article published within the past year based on scientific merit, methodological rigor, and importance to the specialty.

Lynn Stothers, MD, MHS, UCLA Urology professor, received the 2023 Best Reviewer award from the *Journal of Urology*.

The new UCLA Urology residents:



Brenna Briles, MD

Medical School: Baylor College of Medicine

Areas of Interest: LGBT health, gender-affirming surgery and urologic reconstruction, patient-centered outcomes

Why UCLA Urology: “I was drawn to UCLA’s urology residency because of its robust commitment to LGBTQ+ health, particularly through its comprehensive gender health program. The diverse patient population, combined with the dedicated research time to enhance methodological skills —including qualitative measures — aligns with my passion for delivering inclusive and impactful health care.”



Kevin Chang, MD

Medical School: UCSF School of Medicine

Areas of Interest: Urologic oncology, especially bladder-sparing therapeutic approaches to bladder cancer; health disparities in access to urologic care and urologic outcomes

Why UCLA Urology: “I was incredibly inspired by the faculty and residents I worked with during my visiting rotation as a medical student. Moreover, UCLA Urology offers the opportunity to train in a variety of practice settings — including tertiary academic center, county hospital, and VA — in such a way that I felt I would come out of my training with the confidence and ability to provide excellent urologic care to a diverse patient population.”



Michael Okene, MD

Medical School: Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine

Areas of Interest: Endourology, andrology, health disparities

Why UCLA Urology: “The extensive mentorship that the faculty here at UCLA provide to their residents is what drew me. Seeing physicians offer their advice and support for their trainees left me feeling like I would be in good hands and prepared to serve a community I grew up very close to.”



Manaka Sato, MD

Medical School: Carle Illinois College of Medicine

Areas of Interest: Reconstructive urology, pediatric urology, female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery, health disparities

Why UCLA Urology: “During my away rotation, I experienced firsthand the endless and unique opportunities that UCLA had to offer. Most importantly, I was drawn to the family feel of UCLA Urology, especially as a medical student without a home urology program. I’m excited to work alongside worldclass leaders and serve a diverse patient population in the city I call home.”

NEW FELLOWS

The following individuals recently started their UCLA Urology



Madeleine Burg, MD, comes to UCLA Urology after completing her residency at USC Institute of Urology/Los Angeles General Medical Center. Dr. Burg's research interests include male and female voiding dysfunction and perioperative optimization and risk assessment.



Catherine C. Gu, MD, joins UCLA Urology after completing her residency at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital. Under the mentorship of Dr. Jesse Mills, she will be focusing on male infertility and sexual dysfunction.



Michael Chen, MD, completed his urology residency at Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine and is now a kidney transplant fellow. His research focuses on emerging technologies in kidney transplantation, with a particular interest in device development and the integration of artificial intelligence in organ selection.



Matthew Nitti, MD, comes to UCLA Urology after completing his residency at Louisiana State University - New Orleans. His research will focus on long-term outcomes from the HoLEP procedure for benign prostatic hyperplasia. He is also interested in the medical and surgical management of complex stone disease.



Mary Fakunle, MD, joins the department from UC San Francisco. Dr. Fakunle's research focuses on genomic contributors to prostate cancer in African American men, as well as somatic mutations arising in these men that may put them at risk for more aggressive cancer.



Victoria E. Rodriguez, PhD, MSW, MPH, comes to UCLA Urology from the UC Irvine Program in Public Health. Dr. Rodriguez's research focuses on advancing health equity among marginalized and underserved populations — specifically endometrial cancer disparities, treatment outcomes and survivorship experiences — utilizing mixed methods and social epidemiological approaches.



Thomas W. Gaither, MD, MAS, starts his fellowship after completing his UCLA Urology residency. Dr. Gaither's overarching research goal is to create a psychometrically validated, health-related quality of life measure for receptive anal intercourse (RAI). This will enable researchers to more objectively understand and compare studies of RAI and how various disease states impact it.



Heather Rosett, MD, starts her UCLA Urology fellowship after completing her residency at the University of Utah, where she focused on the association between enlarged genital hiatus and development of prolapse over the first year postpartum.

fellowship training:



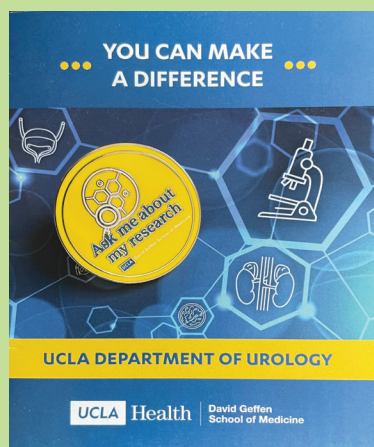
Eliya Shachar, MD, joins UCLA Urology from Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, Israel. Her primary focus is gynecologic cancers, and she is interested in exploring how proven evidence-based interventions and treatments strategies can be implemented more effectively in diverse health care settings, including the hurdles of testing for hereditary cancer syndromes in underserved populations.



Jordyn Silverstein, MD, completed her internal medicine residency training at UC San Francisco. Her UCLA Urology hematology/oncology fellowship focuses on understanding predictive biomarkers of response for antibody drug conjugates in gynecologic and urologic cancers.



Nancy Ye, MD, joins UCLA Urology after completing her urology residency at Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine. Her research focuses on male infertility and sexual health.



Impact of Philanthropy

Philanthropy plays a pivotal role in advancing academic urologic research, training, and patient care by providing essential funding and resources that might not be available through traditional channels. In the realm of urology, where research and clinical advances are crucial for improving patient outcomes and developing innovative treatments, philanthropic support enables researchers to explore novel approaches, undertake high-risk projects, and translate findings into practical solutions. This financial backing also helps to enhance training programs for future urologists, ensuring that they have access to cutting-edge knowledge and techniques. Furthermore, philanthropy contributes directly to patient care by funding specialized programs, improving access to advanced treatments, and supporting initiatives that enhance the quality of life for patients. In essence, philanthropic contributions are vital for fostering breakthroughs, nurturing talent, and ensuring that patients benefit from the latest advances in urological care.

If you would like to learn more about how you can support the UCLA Department of Urology and contribute to its mission of advancing research, training, and patient care, please contact Molly Moursi at emoursi@mednet.ucla.edu. Your support can make a significant difference in shaping the future of urology and enhancing patient outcomes.



Above: Trena Greitzer (second from left) was joined by her children and grandchildren at the donor wall, which recognized her gift to The UCLA Foundation establishing the Trena and Stanley Greitzer Family Foundation Research Fund, an endowed fund in the Department of Urology supporting the bladder cancer research of Drs. Karim Chamie (below, performing bladder surgery) and Alexandra Drakaki.

UCLA Urology Fourth-Year Residents Focus on Research

At the halfway point in their training, UCLA Urology residents step away from the clinics and operating rooms to spend a year conducting research. Following are the paths chosen by UCLA Urology's 2024-25 fourth-year residents:



Dr. Asha Ayub is spending her research year investigating the use of 3D modeling software as a patient education and surgical planning tool under the mentorship of **Dr. Joseph Shirk**, UCLA Urology assistant professor and chief of urology at the Greater Los Angeles VA Health System. Dr. Ayub will be studying how virtual 3D models constructed from patients' MRI or CT images can be used as a decisional aide to help them better understand small renal masses. "This technology has the ability to drastically improve patients' understanding of their disease process and thus be able to truly engage in shared decision making," Dr. Ayub explains. "It takes the abstract concept of a mass and creates a tangible representation of it."

In addition, Dr. Ayub will be working on a project to assess the feasibility of using the 3D modeling software to create tumor maps for bladder cancer and assess the concordance between standard visual inspection intra-operatively and tumor maps to identify opportunities for improving surgical planning for bladder cancer. "My work this year allows me to build on my prior work in health services research, and also explore how to improve urologic oncology outcomes with novel technologies," Dr. Ayub says.



Dr. Aboubacar Kaba is spending his research year under the apprenticeship of **Dr. Brian Shuch**, UCLA Urology associate professor, director of the Institute of Urologic Oncology Kidney Cancer Program, and Henry Alvin and Carrie L. Meinhardt Chair for Kidney Cancer Research. Dr. Kaba's main focus is

on evaluating clinical characteristics of small renal masses in immunocompromised patients, with a particular interest in the transplant patient population.

"We're finding more and more small renal masses and gaining a better understanding that we don't have to treat them as aggressively as we once did," Dr. Kaba says. "For transplant patients, often times these masses are identified at the time of workup for transplantation, which can act as a barrier or delay to transplantation. I hope this work helps us better understand how to best manage this unique patient population." Dr. Kaba will also spend time working with a startup company that aims to use AI to improve patient-centered education and advocacy.



Dr. Austin Lee is pursuing his research year under the mentorship of **Dr. Christopher S. Saigal**, UCLA Urology professor and executive vice chair, who is a renowned expert in quality improvement and shared decision making. Dr. Lee is focusing on the impact of shared decision making and the use of digital decision aids to facilitate patient-centered management of nephrolithiasis. "With clinical care becoming more personalized, patient-provider mutual understanding is crucial when deciding upon a management decision in often clinically equivocal contexts," Dr. Lee explains.

In addition to evaluating the role of shared decision making, Dr. Lee hopes to continue studying the integration of new technological advances in the practice of urology. Having long been drawn to the innovative nature of urologic surgery, he is using his research year to further develop these interests. "I am committed to working at the interface of bridging technologic advancement in urology with the timeless principles of compassionate care to ensure optimal care for all patients," Dr. Lee says.

Get Together Foundation



Sid Henderson received the ultimate gift from her husband at UCLA on March 17, 2004: Through the UCLA Kidney Transplant Program, one of Tom Henderson's kidneys was transplanted into his wife, allowing her to lead an active and healthy life ever since.

Born with polycystic kidney disease — a genetic disorder that also affected her father and brother — Sid had experienced a years-long deterioration of her kidney function that would ultimately cause her to require dialysis in order to stay alive. The heroic act of her husband was something Sid Henderson

their senior year in high school, in 1974. At the time of Tom Henderson's death, members of PACIFIC had been planning for a charity event that would commemorate the band's 50th anniversary.

"When Tom passed, Sid told us he would want the show to go on," says Kevin Wachs, PACIFIC's drummer who, with his wife, runs the Get Together Foundation, which holds annual fund-raising events in support of charitable causes, often with PACIFIC performing. "We left it up to her what we should raise money for, and she thought it would be most meaningful to Tom to support the UCLA Kidney Transplantation & Exchange Program. We loved that idea."

The event, held July 5 at the Canyon Club in Agoura Hills, CA,



calls bashert — a Yiddish term for "meant to be," often used in reference to finding one's soulmate.

"For anyone to donate a part of themselves is huge, but for Tom to come into my life, decide to get tested, find out he was a match, and step up to do this for me...my heart just swells," she says.

Tom Henderson passed away in February, a month before the 20th anniversary of the transplant. This year also had special meaning for another reason. Tom Henderson, who had a 40-year career as an environmental engineer at Lockheed Martin — the third generation in his family to work for the company — was the lead singer of the surf-rock band PACIFIC, which he and his friends formed



included a silent auction, live auction, and performances by the Steve Goddard Band as well as PACIFIC. "It was a full house, and we made sure to remind everyone why we were there," Wachs says. "In many ways the evening was bittersweet, because it will never be the same without Tom. But it was a great tribute to his legacy."



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U.S. News & World Report's annual Best Hospitals survey ranks UCLA Health on the 2024-2025 Best Hospitals Honor Roll, which represents the top hospitals nationally for excellence in multiple areas of care. In California, UCLA Health ranked as the #1 state and regional hospital. UCLA Urology was ranked as the nation's #4 urology department.



The Men's Clinic at UCLA

DID YOU KNOW?

Sperm retrieval can offer hope to patients where no sperm is found in the semen. Through advanced techniques such as testicular sperm extraction (TESE) or microdissection (micro-TESE), sperm can often be retrieved directly from the testes, making it possible to father biological children through in vitro fertilization.

The Men's Clinic at UCLA is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary health and wellness center located in Santa Monica, with a satellite clinic in Burbank. For more information or to make an appointment, call (310) 794-7700.



**Give Now.
Here's How.**

Contributions to UCLA Urology support our research programs and help our faculty make the cutting-edge discoveries that can save lives. You can make a gift to UCLA Urology by logging on to <http://giving.ucla.edu/urology>. Please call (310) 968-1560 if you have any questions about making a gift to UCLA Urology.

UPDATE

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