



William B. Westwood 2020 Distinguished Alumni The Graduate School

Dean Mitchell Watsky, PhD and The Graduate School are pleased to announce that Bill Westwood is the 2020 recipient of the prestigious *Distinguished Alumni Award*. Bill is a 1972 graduate of the Medical Illustration Graduate Program. The award is sponsored by the Office of Alumni Engagement.

In his remarks, Watsky said, "In addition to being an exceptionally accomplished medical artist, he is a renowned leader in his profession. He is a well-respected teacher, mentor and advisor on business issues and artists' rights. Bill is a dedicated alumnus and supporter of our Dept. of Medical Illustration, serving as an Asst. Adjunct Professor and as a member of the National Advisory Council for the Graduate Program. Through his professional work and service, Mr. Westwood has embodied the values and vision of The Graduate School. I am delighted that we can recognize him through this Distinguished Alumni Award."

Here is Bill's story in his own words: "I have a 50-year love affair with medical illustration, which I first found out about through a happy accident. Early in my junior year of college at Mercer University, an art teacher gave me a C in a de-

sign course. I was really angry. I'd NEVER gotten anything less than an A in any art course I'd ever taken. I went to her office to yell at her for giving me a C. We ended up talking about art careers over glasses of wine and she suggested I might want to think about medical illustration, given my strong desire to create realistic art in the age of abstract expressionism.

"Curious but not really knowing anything about medical illustration (and assuming it involved those crude little line illustrations I saw in my biology book), I spoke to the head of the art department at Mercer, who had a former student (Frances DeRoller) who was a medical illustrator in Augusta, GA, just a few hours away from Mercer. I figured I had nothing to lose, so I arranged to visit the MCG program to see what this field was all about. I went for the visit with a fairly lackadaisical

attitude. However, upon arrival, I met an incredible faculty including Orville Parkes, Octavia Garlington, Francis DeRoller and Tommy Lanier. I also met a dynamic group of students who were creating mind blowing medical artwork, including David Mascaro, Grover Hogan, Gary Bishop and Mary Brown! By the end of that day, I knew I had found my career! Then I learned that the program only accepted 4 students a year out of several hundred applicants, and I was terrified that I might not get in.

"From that day, I embarked on a single-minded pursuit of my goal of getting accepted at MCG and becoming a medical illustrator. I never faltered in that pursuit and was eventually accepted and entered in 1967 with first-year classmates, Don Biggerstaff, Steve Harrison and Karen Waldo.



▲ The Class of 1970: L-to-R, Bill Westwood, Karen Waldo, Steven Harrison, and Don Biggerstaff.

"At the beginning of my second year, my career plans were disrupted by the Vietnam War. Though I was originally deferred from the draft for the duration of the three year program, the Vietnam war increased in intensity and I, and many others, lost my graduate school deferment. I managed to complete my second year before finally being drafted in June of 1969 when I was sent to Ft. Knox, Kentucky for Basic Training and then to Ft. Polk, Louisiana for Advanced Infantry Training in preparation for going to Vietnam. Through a rather remarkable series of events (which would take far too long to describe here), I ended up

going to Germany instead and working as a medical illustrator in the 26th Medical Illustration Detachment in Landstuhl, West Germany. I spent a year there working on some exciting medical art projects and then was honorably discharged to return to MCG and complete my third year.

"From the first day of class, we all knew that Bill was serious. About everything. He worked very hard, yet was always willing to share his successes with his colleagues."

—Don Biggerstaff

"I was fortunate to be appointed as the Graduate Teaching Assistant upon my return to Augusta in the spring of 1971. That fall, I attended the annual meeting of the Association of Medical Illustrators (AMI) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. By happenstance, I met Bob Benassi, a medical illustrator in the Section of Medical Graphics at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN and the first graduate of the Medical Illustration Graduate Program in Augusta. I must have said something right to Bob during that late night discussion in the AMI hospitality suite, because the following January he was responsible for my getting invited to Mayo to interview for a job opening there. They offered me a position shortly thereafter.

"I spent ten terrific years at Mayo. While there, I met and got to know Russell Drake, (perhaps one of this profession's greatest medical illustrators). I used to spend hours going through files containing thousands of spectacular pieces of original artwork by the likes of Drake, Eleanora Frye, Ralph Sweet and other medical illustration masters who had previously worked at Mayo. Studying this work up close, was a rare opportunity and a post-graduate course within itself.

"Over the next decade, I was privileged to work with extraordinary Mayo surgeons and scientists, who not only appreciated what I and my talented colleagues did for them, but were supportive and encouraging. Vince Destro, who was Head of the Medical Graphics Section and Bob Benassi both

encouraged me to get involved with the AMI, which I did and which I credit with helping propel my career forward.

"After a year or two at Mayo, I was asked to join neurosurgeon Edward Laws and rhinologic surgeon Eugene B. Kern, to embark on an effort to change the way that pituitary tumor surgeries were performed. At that time, pituitary tumors were approached transcranially, which always resulted in the loss of vision in one eye, since one optic nerve had to be cut to reach the pituitary from above. Kern and Laws revived, improved and perfected the transseptal, transphenoidal approach to the pituitary. A variation of this procedure had originally been developed by Dr. Harvey Cushing at Johns Hopkins University around the turn of the century. However, the procedure quickly fell into disfavor because of high rates of morbidity and in the decades that followed, this procedure was explicitly discouraged in all of the leading neurosurgical texts.

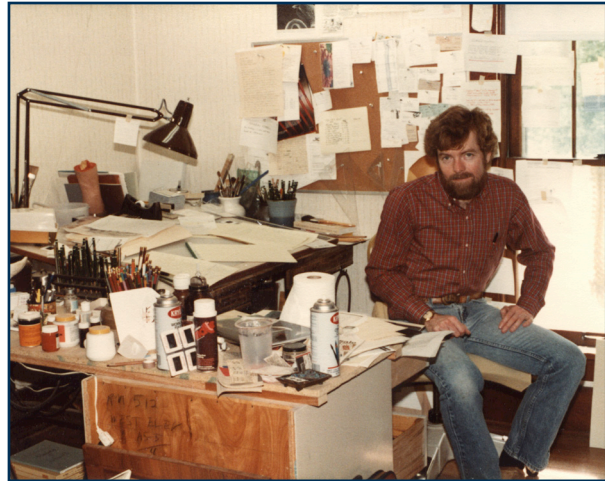
"My role working with these two amazing surgeons was not only to illustrate their procedure, but to help them develop strategies to change the perception among neurosurgeons that the transphenoidal approach to the pituitary was unsafe and difficult. To fully understand the procedure, I sat in on dozens of surgeries and attended rounds with the surgeons numerous times.

"As a student, I came to know and admire Bill as a teacher, not just as a classmate. If he didn't know the answer to something, he would research the hell out of it. He was, and still is, very thorough."

—Steve Harrison

"After identifying all of the objections that led the neurosurgical world to dismiss the transphenoidal procedure, I designed a 50 foot exhibit that addressed these objections and visually demonstrated each step of the procedure using life-sized wax models and line art illustrations. At its center, the exhibit incorporated an actual operating micro-

scope, through which visitors could view and use instruments to probe a model of an exposed pituitary tumor as the surgeon would see it through the floor of the sella turcica. This exhibit went



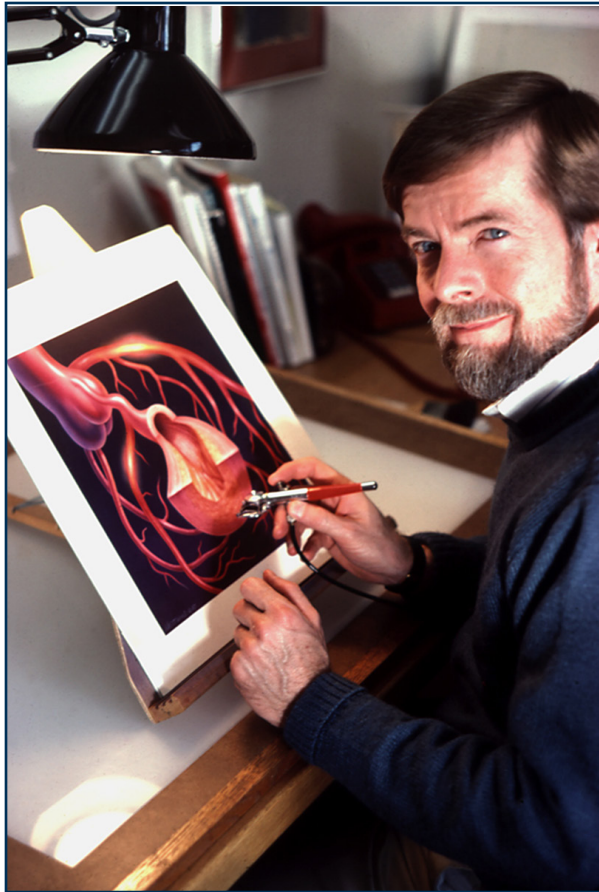
▲ Bill Westwood in his first freelance studio.

on to win a Billings Gold Medal in 1977 from the American Medical Association as well as numerous other awards and eventually changed the way that pituitary tumor surgeries are performed.

"Additional illustrations I did of the surgical technique were used by the doctors in dozens of presentations and after only a few years, the transseptal, transphenoidal approach to the pituitary became the preferred surgical treatment for pituitary tumors. Early in the process, Drs. Kern and Laws asked me to be a co-author on both the exhibit and the major papers that followed (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/595263>).

"During my years at Mayo, I worked on numerous other interesting and challenging projects, learning and perfecting new illustrative techniques. I also learned to create, mold and cast 3D anatomical/surgical models in wax, epoxy and silicones. Working with Dr. Kern a few years later, I became the co-developer of a nasal septal button used to close nasal septal perforations non-surgically. Dr. Kern and I later co-invented and patented a 'nosebleed clip' to treat spontaneous and traumatic nosebleeds.

"As exciting and interesting as these years at Mayo were, I had always dreamed of being self-employed and in 1982 I left Mayo to go



▲ Bill in his new and improved studio in Rochester, NY, 1987.
▶ AMI President Betsy Palay presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Bill in 2010.

into business for myself. During this time, 99.9% of medical illustrators worked for hospitals or medical schools. In the late 1970s there were only about a dozen or so self-employed medical illustrators across the country. I became part of a movement by a number of young, ambitious medical illustrators who left corporate employment and opened up editorial and advertising markets to establish our presence in commercial medical illustration, working for medical advertising agencies and pharmaceutical companies, as well as medical journals.

“Over the past 48 years, my career has provided me with incredible opportunities. I conceived of, created, and guided the growth of the *Medical Illustration SourceBook*. This successful marketing tool has generated thousands of assignments for medical illustrators throughout the country and helped them earn, literally, millions of dollars.

Though originally developed on my own time, in 1987, I turned over ownership of the *SourceBook* to the AMI while continuing to guide its growth as Editor until 2002.

“To date, my medical artwork has won 39 awards, including nine Max Brödel Awards for halftone surgical illustration and a Silver Medal from the Society of Illustrators Los Angeles for editorial illustration. In 2010, I was honored to be selected as the recipient of that year’s AMI Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 2016, I was selected as recipient of the Max Brödel Award for Excellence in Education. Also in 2016, I received the Outstanding Alumni Award from the Medical Illustration Graduate Program at Augusta University. And today, The Graduate School has chosen to honor me as this year’s Distinguished Alumnus. I’m very proud of all of this recognition, but none



of it could have happened were it not for the incredible training I received during my student years from the outstanding faculty members in the medical illustration program as well as the anatomists, pathologists and surgeons who taught us alongside the medical students.

“Early on in the development of my business I re-

alized that neither I nor the numerous other medical illustrators who were leaving jobs to become self-employed, had the necessary business skills to effectively market and promote themselves, understand and negotiate fees and contracts, deal with work for hire and other copyright issues or write and manage licensing of their artwork. Business issues for medical illustrators became another one of my passions and I've spent years working to educate myself and sharing that knowledge with fellow AMI members through presentations, workshops, written articles and personal consultations. As an Asst. Adjunct Professor of the Medical Illustration Graduate Program, for the past ten years or so, I enjoy working with current students, sharing my knowledge and expertise. The Augusta program has always been a national leader in the education of medical illustrators.

"The profession of medical illustration was supposed to have faded away in the early 1900s with the advent of photography. It was supposed to have faded away in the early 1970s, when there was a push to eliminate medical illustration departments at hospitals across the country and minimize the importance of science-based medical artwork. It was supposed to fade away more recently, with the rise of computer imagery (hasn't everything already been illustrated?). However, medical illustration and the need for it, hasn't stopped growing since the modern father of the profession—Max Brödel—started the first program in medical illustration at Johns Hopkins University in 1911.

"Over the span of my career, the demand for medical illustration has never stopped expanding. According to a 2011 study in the Transactions of the American Clinical and Climatological Association, medical knowledge is reported to have been expanding exponentially. The doubling time of this knowledge was an estimated 50 years in 1950, seven years by 1980, 3.5 years in 2010 and is projected to be every 73 days by this year!

"Not only will the need for images of normal and pathological human anatomy continue to increase, but the continuous development of new surgical techniques and procedures has created a huge and ongoing need to visually explain them. Technical scientific advances has promulgated increased study and greater understanding at the



▲ William B. "Obi Wan" Westwood.

molecular level, which has in turn spawned new and growing demands for medically trained illustrators and animators to visually communicate new scientific theories and advancements. Medical illustration has not and will not fade away. Through the ongoing excellence of the Medical Illustration Graduate Program and teaching faculty at Augusta University, and the other graduate medical illustration programs in the US and Canada, it will continue to flourish and grow into the foreseeable future.

"My career has encompassed doing medical illustration for the US army, working on staff at a world class medical institution, illustrating textbooks, creating conceptual editorial and advertising illustration and creating demonstrative anatomical and surgical exhibits for leading trial attorneys throughout the country. And I have been truly blessed to have known and worked with so many wonderful, talented medical illustration colleagues, as well as surgeons and other physicians, who are always so willing to share their knowledge and expertise. I can't imagine having a more satisfying, fulfilling, interesting and enjoyable career than I have had so far, and I have no intentions of slowing down anytime soon."

Westwood was nominated for this singular honor by Bill Andrews, Chair of Medical Illustration. In his nomination letter Andrews said, "In addition to being an award-winning illustrator, Bill Westwood has had a long and illustrious career of outstanding service to the profession... he is a true Jedi Master of medical illustration." In conclusion, Andrews said, "Bill's active support and involvement in the Medical Illustration Graduate Program over the years has been a key factor... to our ongoing success in training the finest medical illustrators in the country."