

# BARE BONES CHRONICLE



The Newsletter of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

FOOT & ANKLE  
HAND  
ONCOLOGY  
ORTHO ON-DEMAND  
PEDIATRICS  
PODIATRY  
SHOULDER  
SPINE  
SPORTS MEDICINE  
TOTAL JOINTS  
TRAUMA



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL COLLEGE  
OF GEORGIA

Orthopaedic Surgery



## *Chair's Corner*

Greetings from Augusta,

It is my privilege to welcome you to this edition of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and MCG Orthopaedic Residency newsletter.

This is an especially exciting time of year for our department. We have recently concluded interviews for next year's residency class. Under the outstanding leadership of Program Director Dr. Uzundu Agochukwu and Program Coordinator Shannon Williford, our residency program remains both highly competitive and widely sought after.

This year, we received applications from exceptional applicants across the country for our four available positions. The Medical College of Georgia, now the fourth largest medical school in the nation, continues to produce outstanding students, with approximately 20 graduates each year pursuing orthopaedic surgery residency. The consistent strength of our MCG applicants reflects the dedicated mentorship provided by our residents and faculty.

Our interview process now spans two weekends: Friday is dedicated primarily to MCG students, followed by a social gathering that brings all applicants together. Saturday is devoted to interviewing visiting students. With interviews complete, our rank list is being finalized. We now look forward to Match Day on Friday, March 20th.

Our residents remain the heart of this program. They take tremendous pride and ownership in cultivating the cohesive culture that defines and distinguishes our program. Their insight is invaluable in identifying applicants who will thrive here, not only academically and surgically, but also within the collaborative spirit that makes our program unique.

This year marks a period of expansion and opportunity for our department. Columbia County Hospital is scheduled to open in September as a 100-bed community hospital, broadening our clinical footprint and further enhancing training opportunities for our residents. Our department is supported by 13 orthopaedic surgeons, 3 podiatric specialists, 12 advanced practice providers, and a highly skilled nursing team. Each team member contributes to the depth and quality of care we provide.

Excellence in clinical care is matched by excellence in education. Our faculty continue to be recognized for their dedication to teaching. This year, six faculty members were honored for excellence in Undergraduate Medical Education: Dr. Uzundu Agochukwu, Dr. Ryan DeCoons, Dr. Mark Fulcher, Dr. Kelly Homlar, Dr. P. Chris Johnson, and Dr. Ed Szabo. In addition, Dr. Agochukwu and Dr. Fulcher were recognized for their contributions to Graduate Medical Education. These achievements reflect a department-wide commitment to mentorship and academic distinction.

Even as we grow and expand, our traditions remain strong. Morning Report convenes each morning at 6:30 am. Not only does this ensure each patient receives appropriate care, this continues to serve as a cornerstone of resident education and collegial exchange, reinforcing both accountability and camaraderie. We typically follow Morning Report with a didactic lecture before heading to the OR clinic. It is one of many enduring elements that anchor our program's culture.

Another enduring tradition of this program is our shared mission:

1. To provide world-class orthopaedic care to every patient, regardless of background or means or circumstance.
2. To attract, train, and retain the very best physicians for Georgia and the nation.
3. To develop innovative and improved approaches to delivering musculoskeletal care to an aging and increasingly active population.

It is a privilege to serve as Chair of a department with such a rich history and boundless potential, and professionals at every level dedicated to our mission. Our faculty and residents and staff are united in their commitment to excellence, to one another, and to the patients and communities we serve.

To our alumni and friends: you remain an essential part of this program's legacy and future. Your continued interest, engagement, and support ensure that our traditions endure even as we

continue to grow and evolve.

Sincerely,



Monte

---

## FRANK H. STELLING CONFERENCE 2025

Our 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Frank H. Stelling Pediatric Orthopaedic Conference took place on October 10, 2025.

Distinguished visiting professor, Dr. Robert K. Lark, of Duke University Medical Center, joined us and lectured on “Common Pediatric Orthopaedic Consults”, “Functional Motion in Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis”, and “Leading Small Teams”.

We also had a number of discussions and case presentations made by our House Staff.



---

## SPORTS MEDICINE AND SHOULDER CONFERENCE 2025





On October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, we held our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Sports Medicine and Shoulder Conference at SRP Park in North Augusta, SC. We welcomed distinguished visiting professor, Dr. Robert Willson.



Dr. Willson presented “When is a ‘Negative’ MRI not actually negative? Reinvesting in Physical Examination”, “Meniscus Tear Panel: Cut/Repair/Non-op?”, and “The acutely injured knee from the field to the OR” during his time with us.



Dr. Stephen Parada presented “Shoulder Instability Management From in-game dislocation to the OR”, the “Shoulder Complex Case Panel”, and “Day in the Life of the Team Doc”.

Following the program, our residents took to the field for some batting practice!



# AOFAS SKILLS WEEK 2025

From September 10-13, 2025, two of our chief residents, John Courson (left) and Henry Twibell (right), attended the AOFAS Resident Skills Course in Denver, Colorado.

The course was sponsored by Paragon and included hands-on labs for MTP joint fusion, ankle fractures, and ankle/subtalar fusion. Our residents are always on-the-go, further expanding their skill sets at courses and meetings across the country.

The AOFAS Annual Meeting 2026 will be held from September 16-19, next year.



---

## CAST & CREW

### FACULTY HIGHLIGHT



# Uzundu Agochukwu, MD

Professor / Residency Program Director / Orthopaedic Spine Surgery

Dr. Agochukwu was raised in New Orleans, Louisiana, and earned his undergraduate degree from Louisiana State University. Prior to embarking on his graduate education, he accepted the Army Health Professional Scholars Program Scholarship. He attended medical school at the Indiana University School of Medicine and subsequently completed his internship and residency training at Madigan Army Medical Center.

Following his residency, Dr. Agochukwu dedicated four years to serving the military at Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. During this time, he had the honor of acting as the team doctor for elite special forces units and later completed a Spine Fellowship.

Outside of his medical practice and operating room responsibilities, Dr. Agochukwu enjoys playing golf, engaging in competitive bodybuilding, and spending quality time with his wife and children. He is passionate about mentorship, both giving and receiving, and is an accomplished cook, specializing in Creole cuisine with rich, multi-ethnic flavor blends. Additionally, he is an avid shoe collector.

“Caring for patients is truly a privilege. The journey to becoming a skilled orthopedic surgeon is challenging but immensely rewarding. While it requires significant time and dedication to excel in this field, it is vital not to overlook the importance of family. This foundation is an essential yet often overlooked component of success. I am particularly passionate about fostering relationships, whether with friends, mentees, mentors, family, or patients. I strive to treat each day as a gift, as tomorrow is never guaranteed.”





---

## NEW TO THE CREW: WELCOME DRs. DANAHER AND SHIVER



**Michael Danaher, MD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor

Michael Danaher, MD, is a graduate of Upstate Medical University. He was Chief Resident in Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Vermont and later completed a Sports Medicine fellowship at Columbia University in New York City. His training included serving as team physician for the New York Yankees, blending his passions for baseball, education, and orthopedics.



**A. Luke Shiver, MD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor

A. Luke Shiver, MD graduated from the Medical College of Georgia. He trained in Pediatrics and Pediatric Musculoskeletal Medicine at Georgia Regents University, then completed an alumni residency in Orthopaedic Surgery. He later pursued a Hand and Upper Extremity fellowship at OrthoCarolina. He has served on Admissions, Curriculum, and Graduate Medical Education committees at Augusta University and OrthoCarolina. Dr. Shiver and his young family are proud to call Augusta home.

---

## RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

The end of 2025 was a busy time for the MCG Orthopaedic Department within the research arena:

PGY4 Merritt Thompson was awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the Thomas E. Whitesides Resident's Research Award at the Georgia Orthopaedic Society's Annual Meeting and PGY3 Brian Johnson won 3<sup>rd</sup> place.



Pictured above: Henry Twibell (left) accepting on behalf of Merritt Thompson and Brian Johnson (right).

---



Director of Shoulder Surgery and the Vice-Chair of Research, Dr. Stephen Parada was part of research teams, across multiple organizations, with ties to Military Orthopaedic Surgery that was awarded the prestigious AAOS Kappa Delta Award for their work in understand and treating anterior shoulder instability among U.S. military members.

Spanning 25 years, this research has had a worldwide impact on treatment options, indications and surgical techniques, leading to what is now considered by many to be a gold standard technique for arthroscopic shoulder stabilization. These contributions have guided clinical and surgical decision-making while enhancing patient care. This team was led by Dr Matthew Provencher from the Steadman Phillipon Clinic in Vail, CO.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

**Cho N, Mehta AI, Vedantam A, Goodwin CR, Agochukwu UF, Grassner L, Nouri A, Aarabi B, Wilson JR, Evaniew N.** Techniques for Cervical Laminoplasty. *Global Spine J.* 2026 Jan;16(1\_suppl):53S-63S. doi: 10.1177/21925682251375448. Epub 2026 Jan 5. PMID: 41489667.

**Bautista A, Liu IZ, Mehta AI, Vedantam A, Goodwin CR, Evaniew N, Ter Wengel PV, Guha D, Rahimi-Movaghar V, Quisling R, Palmer J, Jackson KL, DeVine JG, Wilson JR, Agochukwu UF.** Cervical Disc Arthroplasty for the Treatment of Degenerative Cervical Myelopathy: What's the Evidence? *Global Spine J.* 2026 Jan;16(1\_suppl):7S-14S. doi: 10.1177/21925682251366641. Epub 2026 Jan 5. PMID: 41489662; PMCID: PMC12775276.

**Wang R, Tamilselvan S, Ha JS, Vedantam A, Goodwin CR, Evaniew N, Agochukwu UF, Margetis K, Ha Y, Fehlings M, Wilson JR, Mehta AI.** Clinical Outcomes and Future Directions of Endoscopic Cervical Spine Surgery: A Systematic Review With Narrative Insights. *Global Spine J.* 2026 Jan;16(1\_suppl):15S-27S. doi: 10.1177/21925682251369437. Epub 2026 Jan 5. PMID: 41489665; PMCID: PMC12804027.

**Karthikeyan V, Shakil H, Lozano CS, Malhotra AK, Agochukwu UF, Mehta AI, Goodwin CR, Evaniew N, Koljonen PA, Martin AR, Guest JD, Kurpad SN, Wilson JR, Vedantam A.** Laminoplasty Versus Laminectomy and Fusion in the Treatment of Degenerative Cervical Myelopathy: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Cost and Patient-Centered Outcomes in the United States. *Global Spine J.* 2026 Jan;16(1\_suppl):43S-52S. doi: 10.1177/21925682251357202. Epub 2026 Jan 5. PMID: 41489664; PMCID: PMC12775328.

**Lomax JL, Mehta A, Vedantam A, Goodwin R, Evaniew N, Ganau M, Neal CJ, Marco RAW, Quisling R, Palmer J, Archie AT, Jackson KL, DeVine JG, Wilson JR, Agochukwu UF.** Are Skip Laminectomy and Oblique Corpectomy Effective Options to Treat Degenerative Cervical Myelopathy While Preserving Motion? Results of a Scoping Review. *Global Spine J.* 2026 Jan;16(1\_suppl):64S-71S. doi: 10.1177/21925682251366642. Epub 2026 Jan 5. PMID: 41489661.

**Shah D, Long WE, Eskandari S, Bozzone A, Parada SA.** Geospatial Analysis of Orthopedic Workforce Distribution Across Georgia. *Cureus.* 2025 Oct 28;17(10):e95588. doi: 10.7759/cureus.95588. PMID: 41322886; PMCID: PMC12661093.

**Provencher, Matthew T. MD, MBA, CAPT, MC, USNR (Ret); Hurley, Eoghan T. MD, PhD; Tokish, John M. MD, COL, MC, USAR; Owens, Brett D. MD, COL (Ret), MC, USAR; LeClere, Lance E. MD, CAPT, MC, USNR; Sheean, Andrew J. MD, Lt Col, MC, USAF; Patzkowski, Jeanne C. MD, LTC (P), MC, USA; Waltz, Robert A. MD, CAPT, MC, USN; Parada, Stephen A. MD, LTC (Ret), MC, USA; Dickens, Jonathan F. MD, COL, MC, USAR.** Advancement in Care Through Applied Translational and Clinical Research in Anterior Shoulder Instability: Military Contribution Over 25 Years: Kappa Delta Award. *Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons* 33(23):p 1295-1304, December 1, 2025. | DOI: 10.5435/JAAOS-D-25-00844

## RECENT PRESENTATIONS

**Lomax J, Heldt B, Langston R, Abolhassani A, Knight J, Bozzone AE, Cohn R, Parada SA.** Cost to Publish in Orthopaedic-Indexed Journals. Podium presentation at: 2025 Arthroscopy Association of North America Annual Meeting, May 2025, Washington D.C. c403018

**Twibell H, Murphy C, Steflink MJ, Chandasir A, Pranav Iyer, Bozzone AE, Parada SA.** Predictive Factors of Success and Failure for Treatment of Adhesive Capsulitis with Corticosteroid Injections versus Surgery.

ePoster at 2025 Arthroscopy Association of North America Annual Meeting, May 2025, Washington D.C.

**Houston HB, Twibell H, Bozzone AE, Cushing M, Alston E, Cohn RM, Parada SA.** Exploring Open Access in Orthopaedic Surgery: A Study of Publication Percentages by Source Institution. ePoster at 2025 Arthroscopy Association of North America Annual Meeting, May 2025, Washington D.C., 2025 American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Annual Meeting, March 2025, San Diego, California, and 2025 American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons Annual Meeting, October 2025, San Diego, California.

## Thank you!

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

---

1120 15<sup>th</sup> Street Augusta, GA 30912  
Orthopaedic Contact Number: 762.375.6172



**Twibell H., Yallamraju S., Levit C, Javangula M, Farnham C, Patel S, Thompson M, and Bryan C.** The Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Patient Education: Evaluating ChatGPT Responses to FAQs for Supracondylar Humerus Fracture CRPPs. Podium presentation at Georgia Orthopaedic Society 2025 meeting.

**Twibell H., Yallamraju S., Levit C, Javangula M, Farnham C, Patel S, Thompson M, Johnson B, and Bryan C.** An Evaluation of ChatGPT's Responses to Frequently Asked Questions Following Open Reduction and Internal Fixation of Pediatric Both-Bone Forearm Fractures. Podium presentation at 2025 Georgia Orthopaedic Society meeting.

## SUPPORT OUR RESIDENTS

Your gift to the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery helps our residents build the clinical knowledge and surgical skills they need to practice with confidence and become leaders in Orthopaedics. We truly appreciate your support.

[DONATE NOW](#)

---

**Let's Stay Connected!**

**Like/follow our social media pages below:**

