

CARDIOTHORACIC
 GENERAL
 MINIMAL INVASIVE
 PEDIATRIC HEART
 PEDIATRIC
 PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE
 SURGICAL ONCOLOGY
 THORACIC
 TRANSPLANT
 TRAUMA & CRITICAL CARE
 VASCULAR



THE STITCH

The Newsletter of the
 Department of Surgery



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY
 MEDICAL COLLEGE
 OF GEORGIA

February 2026



Chatter with the Chair

Inspiration

Our Medical School was founded in 1828, but our surgery training program likely gained some formality of training in 1934 when Dr. John Hayes Sherman accepted the chair position. Dr. William Moretz arrived in 1950 as the first “full-time” Professor and Chair. His commitment to **excellence** started the modern era when most of our graduates became board certified surgeons with an active clinical practice in our state and region. After Dr. Moretz became president of MCG, Dr. Arlie Mansberger was recruited from Maryland in 1972 and further built the department until he retired in 1991.

The Moretz Surgical Society was established in 1991 and further solidified with great support from Dr. Mansberger who established the “Red Jacket” award as a symbol of excellence to be granted to those who have contributed significantly to the discipline of surgery in the state of Georgia. This jacket symbolizes **excellence** of our surgical care and celebrates those who have devoted so many years to the care of surgical patients. In the last 3 years, we have awarded the honor to Dr. Charles Howell, Dr. Karen Yeh (posthumously) and Dr. Robyn Hatley, all well-deserving recipients who inspire us to strive for **excellence** in all we do! Congratulations!

Celebrating Achievements

This month’s newsletter further highlights the **excellence** in action among our faculty and residents. Dr. Erika Mabes is training hospital personnel around the state with the RITS program. She and simulation fellow, Zac Aldaher, traverse all corners of Georgia to provide simulation-based training for doctors, nurses, and EMTs through a program supported by the Georgia Trauma Commission. PGY-2 Resident Cole Harp then presented this portable program at the Academic Surgical Congress earlier this month. **Excellence** in action! We had numerous additional presentations at the same meeting and are listed in the subsequent pages.

More achievements of **excellence** can be seen in the work of Dr. Daniel Milgrom and the Oncology team who have restarted the hepatic artery infusion pump to help liver cancer patients. Dr. Aaron Bolduc delivered **excellent** clinical care for adrenal cancer. The late patient’s family recently expressed their gratitude through a memorial golf tournament which raised \$13,000 for the adrenal center – another expression of commitment to **excellence**!

Living Our Values

Our departments pursuit of **excellence** leads to further academic work and clinical care. Please peruse our list of recent publications from the department. We can give you even more details when you attend the next **Moretz Society Meeting on March 13-14** on our own campus. We have many presentations, new faculty introductions and national speakers to update you on our progress. augusta.edu/mcg/surgery/moretz-conference.php

Closing Reflection

Thank you all again for your support and interest in our program. We are continuing the tradition of **excellence** that is ingrained in our soul.

William D Jordan, Jr., MD
 Professor and Chair,
 Department of Surgery
 Medical College of Georgia
 Surgeon in Chief



AFFILIATED WITH MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

THANK YOU

■ The Grinnell family established a generous Foundation gift to support adrenal cancer research in memory of Anthony Grinnell, who passed away in 2024 after five years of treatment at MCG. Dr. Bolduc served as Anthony's surgeon throughout his care. theanthonygrinnellfoundation.org



CONGRATULATIONS

■ Dr. Milgrom officially started our new hepatic artery infusion program by successfully implanting the first hepatic artery infusion pump. This is a therapy for unresectable colorectal liver metastases or unresectable intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma and is shown to increase rate of converting to resectability compared to chemotherapy alone as well as improve overall survival.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

ACADEMIC SURGICAL CONGRESS - FEBRUARY 3-5

- **Harp C (presenter), Moore G, Aldaher Z, Wilcox J, Adam B, Simmerman Mabes E.** Implementing a Portable Simulation-Based Trauma Curriculum for Rural Hospitals: Planning for the Pilot Year of a Statewide Outreach Program in Georgia.
- **Easley M, Graf A, Arkanum E, Aldan R (presenter), Adam B, Simmerman Mabes, E.** What Residents Want: Thematic Analysis of Feedback From Year One of a Longitudinal Surgical Skills Curriculum.
- **Moore G (presenter), Metzger A, Simmerman Mabes, E.** Improving Engagement in General Surgery EPAs: A Structured Implementation Plan with Resident and Faculty Champions.
- **Aldaher Z (presenter), Soohoo AJ, Ierardi R, Harp C, Adam B, Simmerman Mabes E.** Developing and Implementing a Standardized Vascular Surgery Simulation Curriculum for Incoming Integrated Vascular Surgery Residents.

SOUTHEASTERN SURGICAL CONGRESS - FEBRUARY 20-23

- **Aldan R (presenter), Shah D, Langston R, Jones M, Tracy K, Yu J, Simmerman Mabes E.** Non-fatal Firearm Injuries to the Abdomen: Financial Cost and Socioeconomic Factors.
- **Aldan R (presenter), Younan B, Javangula M, Metzger A, Simmerman Mabes E.** Use of Decellularized Fish Skin Xenograft in the Management of Necrotizing Soft Tissue Infections in Patients with Significant Comorbidities.
- **Wilcox J (presenter), Moore G, Garrett M, Ange B, Aldaher Z, Bays B, Medeiros R, Switzer E, Lee A, Adam B, Abuzeid A, Simmerman Mabes E.** Local Institution Needs Assessment for Development of Novel Massive Transfusion Protocol Curriculum.
- **Aldan R (presenter), Younan R, Koko B, Javangula M, Metzger A, Simmerman Mabes E.** Use of Decellularized Fish Skin Xenograft in the Management of Complex Traumatic Wounds.
- **Aldan R (presenter), Shah D, Langston R, Jones M, Tracy K, Yu J, Simmerman Mabes E.** Non-fatal Firearm Injuries of the Thorax: Financial Cost and Socioeconomic Factors.

PUBLICATIONS

- **Dos Santos AK, Sisroe Dos Santos TA, Doddala B, Zabel D.** Upper Limb Wound Profile in Patients Who Inject Heroin and Fentanyl Mixed With Xylazine. *HAND.* 2026;0(0). doi:10.1177/15589447251397009
- **Kim DS, Goo B, Veerapaneni P, Chouhaita R, Cyriac N, Ogbi M, Fulton DJ, Zhang W, Long X, Guha A, Keeney S, Coffey P, Rice RD, Gallo DR, Patel VS, Lee R, Kim HW, Shi H, Weintraub NL.** A regulatory role of novel long non-coding RNA, BAZ1A-AS1, in vascular smooth muscle cell functions during neointima formation in human saphenous veins. *bioRxiv.* 2026 Feb 5:2026.02.03.703576. doi:10.64898/2026.02.03.703576



■ Dr. Mabes secured continued funding from the Georgia Trauma Commission to fully support the Surgical Education and Simulation Research Fellow at MCG and the Rural Interactive Trauma Simulation (RITS) course. She also received a \$10,000 grant from the Georgia Trauma Foundation to expand the RITS, recognizing its statewide impact on trauma education and rural outreach.

■ Congratulations to Dr. Brittany Ange, named Assistant Dean for Dual Degrees and Student Research! In this role, she will continue leading student research efforts while also overseeing dual degree pathways in partnership with the School of Public Health and the Hull College of Business.



Time to Register!

**2026 MORETZ
SURGICAL SOCIETY
MARCH 13-14**