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

March 2026

Chatter with the Chair

CONNECTING OUR SURGICAL TEAM

Inspiration

We had another great Moretz Surgical Society meeting with many alumni joining. Friday was filled with student and resident presentations along with President Hilton reviewing the progress of artificial intelligence in the surgical world. Our student competition was won by Leah Middleton and the resident competition was awarded to Dr. Mikenzie Sturdevant, *Real-World Integration of Artificial Intelligence for Lung Cancer Prediction of Indeterminate Pulmonary Nodules*. On Saturday we enjoyed presentations from faculty and visiting professors including a talk *A Life of Surgery – No Regrets* from Dr. Shanu Kothari of Greenville and a presentation about *Beyond Closure: Modern Strategies in Complex Wound Reconstruction* from Dr. Abigail Chaffin of New Orleans. We concluded the day with a business meeting where Dr. Pepper Brown, General Surgery Class of 1990, of Gainesville was elected president for the 2027 meeting. Please forward ideas for next year's meeting to me at wjordan1@augusta.edu or Dr. Brown at dr.pepperbrown@gmail.com. We want to grow the connection with our local and state surgical community!

Celebrating Achievements

Another outstanding year for the MATCH! Our 7 matched residents are highlighted on the next page and we are very excited to have them join us. Three are graduates of our own medical school and one of those is a Peach State Scholar. This program was initiated at MCG 5 years ago and provides an accelerated pathway for students to complete medical school in 3 years and then complete their surgery training here. In exchange for 2 years of tuition scholarship, the recipient (Silas Howerton) has committed to 2 years of working in rural Georgia after his training is completed. We are quite excited to have him!

Other achievements are well outlined in this month's edition including an outstanding presence at the recent simulation conference in Chicago. Dr. Erika Mabes has been leading our MCG charge using simulation to train rural hospital personnel around the state (see September 2025 Newsletter) and then mentored Dr. Easley and Dr. Aldaher in their presentations at this ACS Simulation Summit Conference. Congratulations to this fantastic team! We also had Dr. Roshan D'Cruz (Pediatric Surgery) and Dr. Mabes presenting at the Wellstar Trauma Symposium in Atlanta.

Closing Reflection

We are really excited about the growing team. New faculty will be coming this fall, we have new interns starting in July, and we are expanding our clinical footprint in the local area and the state.
Thank you to all of the alumni, faculty, residents and students who contribute to this connection!

Living Our Values

"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much."
— Helen Keller

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

Happy Doctors Day! 3-30-26

Wellstar
AFFILIATED WITH MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

CONGRATULATIONS

Wellstar

■ The Annual **Wellstar QI Symposium** was held on March 19 in the Professional Office Building lobby. The Department of Surgery was well represented with 8 posters, out of the total 40 printed for the event – two finalists, two honorable mention, and four accepted for general presentation.

Finalists

■ *Referral Intake and Evaluation Processing* (Transplant, Joshua Clifton, Transplant Quality Manager)

■ *Stopping the Bleed: Standardizing Stapler Loads to Prevent Re-operative Hemorrhage in Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass* (MIS, Ashley Oh, M2)

Honorable Mention

■ *Standardized Colorectal SSI Bundle: Preliminary 3 Month Data Evaluating Compliance* (MIS, Ashley Oh, M2)

■ *Standardized Hysterectomy SSI Bundle: Preliminary 3 Month Data Evaluating Bundle Compliance* (MIS, Ashley Oh, M2)

Also Presented

■ *Bringing the Trauma Bay to the Backroads: Implementing a Portable Simulation Curriculum for Rural Hospitals — The Pilot Year* (Trauma, Kendall Via, M2)

■ *Integrating Simulation and Operative Experience: A Pilot Implementation of a Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration Training for Rural Surgery Preparedness* (Trauma, Richard Aldan, Research Resident)

■ *Red Means Go: Color-Coded Tray Systems for Rapid Trauma Equipment Access* (Trauma, Humberto Perez, PGY-2)

■ **Dr. Mabes** presented on *Expanding Rural Trauma Readiness* and **Dr. D'Cruz** presented on *Pediatric Trauma* at the Wellstar Trauma Symposium on March 23 at the Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta, GA..

wellstar.org/medical-services/specialties/trauma-services/trauma-symposium-speakers

■ **Dr. Mabes** helped deliver an invited 90-minute workshop, **Bridging Theory and Practice: Teaching and Assessing Non-Technical Skills** at the American College of Surgeons Surgical Simulation Summit Annual Meeting as part of the American College of Surgeons Accredited Education Institutes Research and Development Committee, Chicago, IL March 2026.

■ **Dr. Bao-Ling Adam** went to the ACS Surgeons and Engineers meeting where her *Low Cost, DIY, Internal Bleeding Simulator for Trauma Surgical Simulation* was accepted into the *DIY Competition* March 10th and 11th in Chicago, IL.

■ We had another great **Moretz Surgical Society** meeting! **Leah Middleton, M3**, won the student competition with her presentation on *Thirty-Four Year Trends in Gender and URiM Representation Among U.S. General Surgery Faculty* and **Dr. Mikenzie Sturdevant, PGY-4**, won the resident research competition with her presentation on *Real-World Integration of Artificial Intelligence for Lung Cancer Prediction of Indeterminate Pulmonary Nodules.*

Leah Middleton, M3

Dr. Mikenzie Sturdevant, PGY-4

MANUSCRIPTS, PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

■ Fleming A; Sheridan, B; Doño, A; Dinh, T; Meyer, L; Drake, J; Hendrick, L; Dickson, P; Deneve, J; Glazer, E; Fleming, M; Shibata, D; Zhao, J; Ng, T; Yakoub, D; **Neoadjuvant Chemoradiation Versus Chemotherapy for Esophageal Cancer: A Histology-Stratified Update Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials.** *Ann Surg Oncol (2026).*
https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-026-19175-2

■ Bateson, B; Ange, B; Doddalal, B; Hazenberg, E; Bohuta, L; St. Louis, J; **Use and Outcomes Associated with a Clear Prime for Infants Undergoing Cardiac Surgery;** *Annals of Thoracic Surgery Short Reports; 2026; ISSN 2772-9931;*
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.atssr.2026.02.024

■ Liu, G; Agarwal, R; Edupuganti, N; Tayag, N; Soo Hoo, A; Agarwal, G; Jordan, W; **Socioeconomic Determinants of Peripheral Arterial Disease in Dialysis Patients: A National-Level Analysis;** *Annals of Vascular Surgery; Volume 127; 2026; Pages 281-289; ISSN 0890-5096;* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avsg.2026.01.042

ACS Simulation Summit Conference

■ Easley, M (presenter); Arkanum, E; Graf, A; Ange, B; Adam, B; Mabes, ES. **Implementation of a Longitudinal, Independent Surgical Skills Curriculum Tailored to Resident Needs: Results from the First Year of a Simulation-Based Skills Lab.**

■ Aldaher, Z (presenter); Graf, A; Easley, M; Soo Hoo, AJ; Ierardi, R; Adam, B; Mabes, ES. **Developing and Implementing a Standardized Vascular Surgery Simulation Curriculum for General Surgery Residents.**

facs.org/for-medical-professionals/conferences-and-meetings/surgical-simulation-summit/

Save the Dates!

Graduation
Friday, June 26

2026 Georgia Society of the ACS Annual Meeting Aug 28-30, Amelia Island
Submit your abstract ONLINE by June 19, 2026 at 11:45 pm ET.
knowledgeconnex.secure-platform.com/a/page/GSACS2026

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