



Washington
University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

*Chief Residents in General Surgery
Graduation Celebration*

*St. Louis, Missouri
June 25, 2021*



It is with immense joy and pride that the administration, faculty and staff of the Department of Surgery at Washington University in St. Louis celebrate the 2020-2021 General Surgery Chief Residents.

While they will be missed, we are pleased to see the Chiefs successfully move on to the next phase of their careers as they continue their surgical training in fellowships across the country. We are confident that they will accomplish great things and become leaders in Surgery. We also celebrate the contributions of their loved ones, family, and friends without whom the Chiefs' success would not be possible!

2020-2021 Walter F. Ballinger II Administrative Chief Residents



Dr. Darren Cullinan



Dr. Roheena Panni

2020-2021 Chief Residents



Dr. Gayan De Silva



Dr. Rahul Handa



Dr. Kelly Koch



Dr. Jared McAllister



Dr. Linda Schulte



Dr. Tara Semenkovich



Dr. Wen Hui Tan

We wish you all the best of luck!

Evening Program

WelcomeDr. Paul E. Wise
Professor of Surgery, Residency Program Director

Presentation of the Jeffrey F. Moley Mentorship Award.....Dr. Linda Schulte

Presentation of Graduates

Darren Cullinan, MD, MSCI.....Dr. William Hawkins

Gayan De Silva, MD, MS.....Dr. Westley Ohman

Rahul Handa, MD.....Dr. Sean English

Kelly Koch, MD.....Dr. Kelly Vallar

Jared McAllister, MD.....Dr. Michael Awad

Roheena Panni, MD, MPHS.....Dr. Steven Strasberg

Linda Schulte, MD.....Dr. Kunal Kotkar

Tara Semenkovich, MD, MPHS.....Dr. Bryan Meyers

Wen Hui Tan, MD.....Dr. Jeffrey Blatnik

Special Recognitions

Dr. Mary E. Klingensmith.....Dr. Darren Cullinan

Dr. Steven M. Strasberg.....Dr. Roheena Panni

Closing Remarks.....Dr. Timothy J. Eberlein
Bixby Professor, Chairman, Department of Surgery



Darren Cullinan, MD, MSCI

Walter F. Ballinger II Administrative Chief Resident



Darren was raised in Belmont, IA as the oldest of three to parents Bob and Cathy. He had prototypical Iowa upbringing, growing up on a farm and wrestling from a young age. Spending most of his time riding horses and wrestling, he was an academic late bloomer. After high school, Darren attended the University of Iowa where he majored in nursing and met his future wife, Stephanie. After college, Darren and Stephanie got married and moved to Memphis where Stephanie attended optometry school, and Darren received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee. While he was interested in surgery when he started medical school, Darren had many formative experiences in surgery at The Med, Memphis' level one trauma center. Darren matched in general surgery at Washington University. During his lab time he was

mentored by Drs. Hawkins and Gillanders working on a translational science project developing a pancreas cancer clinical trial and getting his MSCI degree. Darren maintained his interest in HPB surgery and ultimately decided to pursue an abdominal transplant surgery fellowship and will remain at Washington University for the next two years.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? Probably another bicycle given the classic formula for number of bikes you need = $n+1$, where n is the current number of bikes you have.

Favorite OR music: Pretty much anything, but country or western for the next two years.

Any maneuvers named after you? While many residents have cut a suture with the mega suture cut needle driver, I think the sheer number of sutures I've inadvertently cut may give me claim to this maneuver. If you cut two V-lock sutures closing a single side of an inguinal hernia flap, you've definitely done a "Cullinan."

Favorite operation: Liver transplant!

Favorite surgical instrument: The Bookwalter with the biggest ring and two posts. If you make a midline laparotomy with a lateral extension, you can expose everything in the abdomen with this retractor.

Favorite post-call meal: To-go brunch and mimosas from Egg followed by a nap on the couch under our cat, Cowboy.

Attending you wish to emulate: There are many but Dr. Hawkins for the take it out mentality and willing mentorship, Dr. Gillanders for his systematic approach in the OR and the lab, Drs. Doyle and Brunt for their precision, Dr. Chapman for the earned autonomy, and Dr. Wise for his relentless advocacy for the residents.

Most memorable Wash U moment: No single moment, but it is amazing to see how much residents grow through the year. Getting to see residents make that leap from unsure intern to a superstar intern who's ready to be a consult resident, or the timid consult resident who's ready to be trauma chief by the end of the year. Watching and fostering this growth is very gratifying.

Pearls of wisdom: When someone calls you with a consult or question, they are asking for your help, be nice and help them.

Gayan De Silva, MD, MS



Gayan was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 11th, 1986 to Ayomi and Chandana De Silva, but was only there a very short time. In October of 1989, his parents made the difficult decision to leave their home, their jobs, and their family, and make the nearly 9,000 mile trip to the US in hopes of a better and brighter future. After short stints in New Rochelle, New York and Columbia, Missouri, he and his parents settled down in Farmington, Michigan. His younger brother, Thishan, soon joined the family in May of 1994. Gayan graduated from Farmington High School in 2005 and matriculated at the University of Michigan, graduating with a degree in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology in 2009. He received his medical degree from the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in 2014 along with a Masters Degree in

Applied and Radiologic Anatomy. It was during his 3rd and 4th year of medical school he knew he wanted to be a surgeon and subsequently matched into the general surgery program at the Washington University in St. Louis. It was during his second year of clinical training he came to love vascular surgery and during his research years, joined the lab of Dr. Mohammed Zayed where he published in basic science, clinical outcomes, and translational research. His time in the lab also resulted in being the co-inventor of a novel suction thrombectomy device for arterial and venous thromboembolic disease, for which he shares a patent. During his 4th year of training, he earned a position as a future vascular surgery fellow at the Washington University in St. Louis, which will start on July 1st, 2021. During his weekends and free time, he can be found creating custom furniture in his basement wood shop, babysitting his god-children (Graham and Ethan), and enjoying every-day life with his lovely girlfriend, Dr. Kristen Ban, and their pets, Nellie and Ella.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? A dinosaur bone for Nellie

Favorite OR music: Hard rock and Hip Hop BBQ

Any maneuvers named after you? Probably only bad ones.

Favorite operation: Carotid endarterectomy, aortobifemoral artery bypass, carotid-subclavian bypass, and an open total abdominal colectomy.

Favorite surgical instrument: Castroviejos

Favorite post-call meal: Belgian waffles or French toast with powdered sugar, berries, and maple syrup

Attending you wish to emulate: Dr. Brian Rubin – who never loses his cool and knows everything.

Most memorable Wash U moment: Having a patient tell me that I would always be their surgeon for the rest of their life.

Pearls of wisdom: (1) Put the patient first and you'll rarely go wrong. (2) Never be afraid to ask for help. (3) Perfect practice makes perfect.

Rahul Handa, MD



Dr. Handa was born in India and moved to the United States in 1994. After about a decade in Philadelphia, his family relocated to St. Louis, where his mother and father continue to practice Geriatric Psychiatry and Cardiac Electrophysiology, respectively. He graduated from John Burroughs School and went on to Wake Forest University, where he was awarded the prestigious Thomas E. and Ruth Mullen academic scholarship. He eventually graduated with a degree in Economics, as well as with Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa distinctions. In 2012, he moved to Ohio for medical school at the University of Cincinnati. As a medical student he was a member of the Arnold P. Gold Humanism Honor Society, and developed his interest in Cardiothoracic Surgery through a research scholarship from the American Association for Thoracic Surgery. He

finally returned to St. Louis in 2016 to begin his surgical training, and will soon begin his fellowship in Cardiothoracic Surgery at the University of California – Los Angeles. He looks forward to cultivating his interests in aortic surgery, mitral disease, and minimally invasive/robotic cardiac surgery. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family and dogs, traveling, playing guitar, and trading options.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? Tesla

Favorite OR music: BBR – EDM/House (BBR)

Any maneuvers named after you? Kelly Clamp/Dermabond

Favorite operation: Kidney Transplant

Favorite surgical instrument: Ryder Needle Driver

Favorite post-call meal: Urban Chestnut STLIPA

Attending you wish to emulate: Tough to pick just one, but the following surgeons each have qualities I hope to emulate someday, and each has had a major impact on my training and development: Drs. Blatnik, Chapman, English, Englert, Hawkins, Henn, Klos, Meyers, Moon, Mutch, Patterson, Punch, Sanford, and Warner.

Most memorable Wash U moment: First solo trauma case

Pearls of wisdom: Something can be learned from every patient, every procedure, and every interaction. Set your goals high and remember that there is no substitute for hard work.

Kelly Koch, MD



Kelly was born and raised in Livonia, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. Although that was home, she spent much of her time further north in Michigan, enjoying one of the many lakes of the "Great Lake State". She has been supported throughout her life by her mom, Diane; father, Tom; and cc, Lisa. She attended the University of Michigan for both undergraduate and medical school, which you may have heard her mention at some point (or you've seen her lanyard). Kelly knew she wanted to be a doctor at a young age and for that reason pursued an undergraduate degree in cellular and molecular biology. She also pursued early employment in a hospital and got her start in patient food services at St. Mary's Hospital. Thanks to a healthy dose of nepotism from her mother who was a medical technologist at the same hospital, she was able to transition from the

basement cafeteria to a job as a phlebotomist. Like all good premedical students, Kelly pursued work in a research lab. Her freshman year was spent manipulating mouse DNA and it was at that time Kelly understood that benchtop research was not for her. Seizing an opportunity that presented at the end of freshman year, Kelly transitioned to the research lab of Drs. Robert Bartlett, Jonathan Haft and Keith Cook. This fortuitous transition in lab work set her on the path that led her to where she is today. The lab was dedicated to transplant, organ preservation and organ replacement using large animal models. It was there that Kelly progressed through responsibilities, first as a sheep critical care nurse, then to large-animal anesthesiologist, to surgical assistant, and finally, surgeon. She still remembers Dr. Camboni walking her through her first sheep thoracotomy and attributes her experiences in the lab to her commitment to being a future surgeon.

Kelly graduated undergrad and her planned "one-year gap year" turned into four as she continued to work on her research projects. During that time, she also worked at REI to satisfy her love of the outdoors and enjoyed her early 20s by not being a medical student. In 2012 she started medical school with the express intent of being a cardiothoracic surgeon. She applied for residency and was lucky enough to match at her first choice, WashU. Coming to WashU felt like joining a family. Although Kelly was sad to leave her initial intern class after two years to continue residency without breaking for research, she can't imagine a better class to join and is proud to be graduating with this class of chiefs.

Once employed as a surgical resident, Kelly gave up her previous hand-damaging hobbies of rock-climbing and Krav Maga in favor of new hobbies, such as napping between call shifts and post-call brunching. She has loved living in St. Louis and can frequently be found running around Forest Park. Kelly has spent the last five years enjoying Missouri and the improvement over Michigan weather. Unfortunately, she still isn't sure what the "Show-Me State" is asking her to show, and never managed to get on board with gooey butter cake. For all her accomplishments during residency, of which there are many, Kelly is most proud of starting "Liver Rounds", with "matching into surgical oncology fellowship" a close second. She looks forward to moving to Miami in a few days to start the final phase of her training.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? A vacation, or a new used car that consistently starts.

Favorite OR music: Classic rock. Billy Joel Pandora radio is a consistent winner.

Any maneuvers named after you? The Koch Maneuver, as described by Dr. Thompson: The violent (and of course accidental) "sling-shooting" of a surgical instrument at your attending's forehead. Whoops.

Favorite operation: Transplant procurements that do not involve flying, gastric resections and right hemicolectomies.

Favorite surgical instrument: A kitner. Or a sponge-stick in the setting of massive traumatic bleeding.

Favorite post-call meal: The caprese grilled cheese at Kingside Diner.

Attending you wish to emulate: Dr. Awad and his calm and collected demeanor in the OR when sh*t hits the fan. I hope to command the OR in a respectful and efficient way that he does, someday.

Most memorable Wash U moment: It's a tie: Having Dr. Meyers cock his head, look at me funny and ask me if I've done my endoscopy rotation yet (yes--and I've logged more than 70 scopes at this point) EVERY TIME I PICK UP AN ENDOSCOPE, OR reading that criticism in my letter of recommendation from Dr. Meyers for oncology fellowship.

Pearls of wisdom: Have fun in the OR. You spend way too much time there to not enjoy yourself. Also, (and I read this repeatedly as a junior resident) trust the process.

Jared McAllister, MD



Jared was born and raised in Longview, Texas, alongside his sister Andrea Shields, by his parents Mike and Lyndell McAllister. He went to college at The University of Texas in Austin and graduated with honors in biomedical engineering (and college football fanaticism). Growing up, he frequently visited his grandparents in Branson and spent summer vacations skiing and boating on Table Rock Lake with his family, so Missouri was already somewhat of a second home. When he was accepted to medical school at Washington University, he jumped at the opportunity. At Washington University, he met his beautiful and talented wife Jackie and found his way to a position in the general surgery residency program. After his second year, he was recruited to join the minimally invasive surgery lab under Dr. Jeffrey Blatnik, and the rest was history. He will start

fellowship in minimally invasive surgery this August at OHSU in Portland, Oregon. He and Jackie have a beautiful son named Henry (1-day-old as of this writing!), who is their pride and joy.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? Likely an upgrade to his 2003 Honda Accord.

Favorite OR music: The Gillanders playlist.

Any maneuvers named after you? There have been several potentials – unknowingly and repeatedly soaking his scrubs with the suction irrigator; stitching a bit of small bowel serosa into an umbilical hernia mesh; spending 30 minutes trying to stop inferior epigastric bleeding after spearing them with a trocar. None original or catastrophic enough to stick.

Favorite operation: Lap chole

Favorite surgical instrument: Laparoscopic Ligasure

Favorite post-call meal: PB&J

Attending you wish to emulate: All of the MIS attendings. Dr. Strasberg for his thoughtfulness; Dr. Punch for their ability to connect with people; and Dr. Moley for his skill and positivity.

Most memorable Wash U moment: Lots...some great resident retreats and graduation events. The look on a patient's face after relieving a tension pneumothorax, reducing an incarcerated inguinal hernia, or draining a perianal abscess. The Semenovich/McAllister ED thoracotomy. Basically just the honor of being a general surgery resident.

Pearls of wisdom: Be kind. Do your best. Learn to read CTs early.

Roheena Panni, MD, MPHS

Walter F. Ballinger II Administrative Chief Resident



Roheena was born and raised in Peshawar, Pakistan, by her parents, with her two brothers Adnan and Usman. She always wanted to pursue a career in medicine. After graduating from high school as the top-scoring student in the state-level standardized board exams, she matriculated to Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan. Her interest in surgical oncology was solidified during medical school. As a fourth-year medical student, she visited Washington University in St. Louis for the first time and worked as a sub-intern in hepatobiliary surgery with Dr. Strasberg, Dr. Linehan and Dr. Hawkins. After finishing medical school, Roheena moved to the US with her parents to pursue her surgical training. She spent two years in the lab of Dr. Linehan to study pancreatic cancer tumor immunology and was fortunate to have matched at Washington University in St. Louis.

During residency, Roheena did a two-year surgical oncology research fellowship and worked with Dr. Hawkins, Dr. Fields, and Dr. DeNardo and identified a small molecule agonist that can overcome resistance to immunotherapy in pancreatic cancer. This preclinical work culminated in an early phase clinical trial which is ongoing. During her two years in the lab, she also completed a Master's in Population Health Sciences under the supervision of Dr. Colditz, while conducting clinical outcomes research in hepatobiliary and other gastrointestinal malignancies. She was honored to be inducted as a graduate trainee into the Washington University chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha this year. Roheena is excited to start her fellowship in complex general surgical oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in August. She is grateful for all the support from her mentors, advisors, friends, and family throughout her training.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? Vacation

Favorite OR music: Top hits on Spotify

Any maneuvers named after you? None that I am aware of

Favorite operation: Laparoscopic adrenalectomy

Favorite surgical instrument: Maryland ligasure

Favorite post-call meal: Cheese omelette

Attending you wish to emulate: Too many! The technical precision of Dr. Doyle and Dr. Brunt, the confidence of Dr. Hawkins, the teaching ability of Dr. Awad & Dr. Blatnik, efficiency and organization of Dr. Fields and the grace of Dr. Strasberg.

Most memorable Wash U moment: It is hard to choose one, but I will never forget operating with junior residents as trauma chief. I enjoyed teaching parts of cases to amazing residents while learning from the opposite side of the table, and at that moment, I was grateful to all my teachers for their patience and persistence who had taught me.

Pearls of wisdom: The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.

Linda Schulte, MD



Linda was born in Tianjin, China to her parents Frank Kui Jin and Jianrong (Jenny) Wang. At the age of five she immigrated to Texas with her family, where her parents both completed graduate degrees in biomedical and electrical engineering. Following the completion of their degrees, the family settled in Seattle, WA, where her father worked as an engineer for Boeing and her mother as an engineer for ATT Wireless. Linda entered the University of Washington through the early entrance Academy program at the age of 16, and still lacks a high school diploma to this day. There, she earned a BA in Poetry and a BS in Biochemistry. She also co-founded a student run consultancy, Montlake Consulting Group, which is now one of the largest non-profit student consultancy groups in the country. Following college, she worked for two years at

Navigant Consulting as a business consultant before moving to St. Louis to attend medical school at Washington University in St. Louis. She stayed on for general surgery residency, where she also completed two years of research in the laboratory of Dr. William Hawkins. During that time she met her husband, Cary Schulte, who works as a Managing Director at CIBC Bank. After returning to clinical residency, Linda was accepted as a fast-track fellow in Cardiothoracic Surgery, where she will be continuing her fellowship training following graduation. She and Cary are proud parents of Snoopy Schulte (she/her), and will be welcoming their first human daughter in August.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? Anything Cary Schulte wants

Favorite OR music: Not safe for work Cardi B

Any maneuvers named after you? Thankfully no

Favorite operation: Any valve repair

Favorite surgical instrument: Non-locking castros

Favorite post-call meal: Sleeping

Attending you wish to emulate: Dr. Patterson and Dr. Moon

Most memorable Wash U moment: Getting to sew every bite of a total arch replacement with Dr. Moon as a fourth year resident.

Pearls of wisdom: Speak truth to bullshit. Especially your own.

Tara Semenkovich, MD, MPHS



Tara was born and reared in Cedarburg, Wisconsin by Victoria and Terrence Skebba. She excelled in high school at the University School of Milwaukee, where she was an avid swimmer and her class valedictorian. She went on to attend Rice University, where she graduated in 2009 Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Biochemistry and Cell Biology, and Hispanic Studies (she loves speaking Spanish!). She went on to attend medical school at Washington University, where she met her mischievous husband Nick. In both college and medical school, Tara worked as an EMT, and briefly flirted with training in emergency medicine, but ultimately developed a passion for thoracic surgery and matched in general surgery at Washington University in 2013. During her research years, Tara and Nick moved to Boston for Nick's medicine

residency at the Brigham, and she worked remotely — before it was cool — with Drs. Bryan Meyers, Benj Kozower, and Varun Puri. Her research focused predominantly on treatment of esophageal cancer, and her multisite study of adjuvant therapy for esophageal cancer won the prestigious Society for Thoracic Surgeon's President's Award. Lab time was productive in many ways, and Tara and Nick have two 'tiny humans': Kendrick (3) and Brooklynn (2) who are crazy little bundles of joy; and she's creating a third (the new guy's ETA is July). She enjoys fighting to improve surgical training for future generations, and to improve support for trainees and their families. Tara will be a cardiothoracic surgery fellow at Washington University this upcoming academic year.

What will you buy with your first paycheck? I'm going to be a fellow, so I'll continue to make near the minimum wage in some states!

Favorite OR music: Anything country. I'm also a fan of the Gillanders playlist.

Any maneuvers named after you? My son Kendrick calls my huge hugs "the mommy squeeze!"

Favorite operation: Anything in the chest.

Favorite surgical instrument: Sternal saw, the robot, and the bovie with the built-in smoke evacuator.

Favorite post-call meal: The Pickles' Monte Croissant breakfast sandwich. Also a bagel and lox.

Attending you wish to emulate: A hybrid of Dr. Patterson and Dr. Meyers.

Most memorable Wash U moment: When I got IV fluids in the ER! Or my first attending-free ED thoracotomy (with ROSC)! Or that time I had 3 phones and 4 pagers (regularly)! Or when the cafeteria started selling toilet paper!

Pearls of wisdom: We can make surgical training better for those trainees below us. Fight for what you believe in; don't let your attendings justify nonsense with their old war stories. Male trainees -- the best way to support women in your program is to take your full paternity leave.

Wen Hui Tan, MD



Wen Hui was born in Malaysia, lived in Michigan and Colorado, and grew up in Henderson, Nevada. She went to MIT for college where she was a Course V major (Chemistry). Though initially undecided as to whether she was going to work as a chemist in industry or go to medical school, a combination of volunteer and research experiences pushed her to medicine. She went to Washington University in St. Louis for medical school. She did a sub-internship on the Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) service and was totally hooked. She did her research years in the labs of Dr. Bochicchio, investigating geriatric trauma outcomes, and Dr. Blatnik, on hernia-related clinical and biomechanical studies, and worked with Dr. Brunt, investigating postoperative opioid use. During this time, she also volunteered with Surgical Outreach for the Americas

(SofA) to provide surgical services to the underserved. Next year, she will continue her training as an MIS fellow at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Outside work, she has two incredibly supportive parents, Keah Choon Tan and Shaw Yun Chiu, and a little brother, Wen Jay. She married the love of her life, Kevin Kuo, in 2018. They have a very spoiled rescue lab mix named Porkchop (after the cartoon character).

What will you buy with your first paycheck? Dinner. Maybe a Tesla.

Favorite OR music: Anything with > 120 bpm that is not country

Any maneuvers named after you? Not that I know of.

Favorite operation: I do love a good right adrenalectomy. There are so many good operations to choose from though!

Favorite surgical instrument: The Ligasure. It is not only very useful, it makes cool sounds

Favorite post-call meal: Anything Kevin makes

Attending you wish to emulate: All of the MIS faculty here -- they are extraordinary teachers, excellent surgeons, and fabulous human beings, every single one of them. Also, Dr. Wise, Dr. Fields, Dr. Kramer, and Dr. Ohman (x2!).

Most memorable Wash U moment: I have so many good memories from residency that it's hard to pick! Some good ones – team snack breaks, watching fireworks from the helipad, and the multi-year Elmore/Brauer WhatsApp thread to name a few...

Pearls of wisdom: Write stuff down. Residency goes by fast and sometimes it's hard to see how much you've grown!

Acknowledgements of Awards 2020-2021

These awards were presented during a Department ceremony on June 16, 2021. We wish to again congratulate and thank these wonderful recipients for all that they do to impact the residents' education and the care of their patients.

Eugene M. Bricker Teaching Award Recipient:

Gayana De Silva, MD, MS

Keith D. Amos Memorial Award Recipient:

Darren Cullinan, MD, MSCI

Evarts A. Graham Teaching Award Recipient:

Jessica Kramer, MD

Gregorio A. Sicard Fellow Teaching Award Recipient:

Jennifer Yu, MD, MPHS

Friend of Surgery Resident Award Recipient:

Josh Leadbetter

Friend of Chief Resident Award Recipients:

Stephanie Franklin, RN
Cheryl Miller, RNFA
Mary Quasebarth, BSN, RN

Advanced Care Practitioner Award Recipient:

Jennifer Raffaelli, NP



“Learning is the only thing the mind never exhausts, never fears, and never regrets.”
– *Leonardo da Vinci*



Thank you for being a part of our evening!

The 2020-2021 Chief Residents

