University Neurosurgery Hosts Levy Conference

The Department of Neurosurgery hosted the annual Levy Conference April 10, featuring Dr. Daniel Barrow. Dr. Barrow, Pamela Rollins Professor and Chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery at Emory University, spoke on “The Current and Future Role of Microsurgery in the Management of Neurovascular Disorders.”

More than 150 people attended the conference, including medical school faculty, residents, and medical students.

The conference concluded with an evening reception at Professor and Chairman Dr. Anil Nanda’s home, honoring graduating resident Dr. Justin Haydel. As a graduate of LSU Health Shreveport’s medical school and the Department of Neurosurgery’s seven-year residency program, the 2015 conference marked Dr. Haydel’s 11th Levy conference. Following graduation, Dr. Haydel is currently training in a spine fellowship at Stanford University.

The conference is made possible by the Mary Louise and Ben Levy, Jr. Visiting Professorship, which the Levys established in 2004. The conference works to honor the memory of the couple by offering an educational opportunity for the Shreveport community.

Louisiana Senator Attends Department’s Gamma Knife Ribbon Cutting

Director of Gamma Knife Surgery and Assistant Professor Dr. Symeon Missios joined University Neurosurgery’s staff in September 2014.

As Director of Gamma Knife Surgery, Dr. Missios frequently performs procedures at the first Gamma Knife Suite in Northwest Louisiana. Sen. David Vitter visited the Gamma Knife in April, commemorating the one-year anniversary of the Gamma Knife Perfexion, an updated, faster machine. Dr. Missios brings an expanded understanding of neuro-oncology to the University Neurosurgery team. He earned his medical degree from Dartmouth Medical School and completed his neurosurgical residency at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Dr. Missios received specialized training in neurosurgical oncology and Gamma Knife radiosurgery through his fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic.

Dr. Missios is heavily involved in the department’s research efforts, having authored over 40 peer-reviewed publications. He works closely with the department’s research fellows and residents.

Dr. Missios’ goal is to establish a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of both benign and malignant brain tumors at LSU Health Shreveport and focus on translational clinical research in conjunction with the Departments of Oncology and Radiation Oncology.
Greetings from University Neurosurgery and LSU Health Shreveport. The spring has brought forth productive change, including promoting Dr. Christina Notarianni as our residency program director. As a graduate of LSU Health Shreveport and our own residency program, no one is better qualified to lead the training of our budding neurosurgeons.

We’re delighted to have matched two new residents on Match Day. James Barry graduated from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, and Cory Markham graduated from LSU Health Shreveport. They officially joined our team in July.

I am happy with the success of our Gray Matters conference in February. Partnering with the Department of Neurology, nearly 100 people attended the symposium, including physicians, physician assistants, nurses, medical students, and nursing students. Dr. Jean Regis, an internationally recognized neurosurgeon and an authority on Gamma Knife surgery, traveled from France to speak at the conference. We enjoyed showing Dr. Regis around LSU Health Shreveport and our fine city.

After updating to the Gamma Knife Perfexion a year ago, we are doing more Gamma Knife procedures than ever before. Director of Gamma Knife Surgery Dr. Symeon Missios and our Gamma Knife nurse Tabitha Ward have done a wonderful job caring for and treating these patients.

With these additions and updates, we continue to provide neurosurgical care to the entire state and the Ark-La-Tex region. If you have any questions, kindly feel free to call me. Thank you.

Wishing you a happy and productive summer!

Sincerely,

Anil Nanda, MD, MPH, FACS
Professor and Chairman
Department of Neurosurgery
University Neurosurgery Alum Leads Residency Program

Assistant Professor and Chief of Pediatric Neurosurgery Dr. Christina Notarianni was promoted to residency program director. She will oversee the residents’ seven-year-long training, preparing budding neurosurgeons.

Dr. Notarianni is an alumna of LSU Health Shreveport and the Department of Neurosurgery’s residency program. She specializes in pediatric neurosurgery and completed a pediatric neurosurgery fellowship at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis and St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital. Dr. Notarianni is the only fellowship-trained pediatric neurosurgeon in Shreveport-Bossier.

University Neurosurgery boasts the largest neurosurgery residency program in Louisiana, accepting two residents a year for the competitive program.

Established in 2002, University Neurosurgery’s residency program was the first new residency program at LSU Health Shreveport in ten years.

On Match Day, March 20, the department welcomed its two newest residents who began working in July. Dr. James Barry graduated from Baylor College of Medicine, and Cory Markham graduated from LSU Health Shreveport.

Neurosurgery Department Celebrates New Clinic Space

The Department of Neurosurgery celebrated its new clinic at Willis-Knighton Pierremont Medical Arts Building with an open house event Jan. 14. The clinic opened in May 2014.

University Neurosurgery’s nearly 11,000-square-foot clinic provides an expanded and updated space for the faculty and patients. Chairman and Professor Dr. Anil Nanda, Clinical Professor Dr. Donald Smith, Chancellor Dr. Robert Barish, Interim Dean Dr. John Marymont and Willis-Knighton President and CEO James Elrod participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Approximately 60 people attended the reception, including area physicians, nurses, and the University Neurosurgery faculty and staff.

Previously, University Neurosurgery’s clinics were held in different locations. Now, all University Neurosurgery physicians hold clinic at the Willis-Knighton Pierremont Medical Arts Building, creating a truly unified space.

To schedule an appointment, call 796-2638. For more information, visit universityneurosurgery.com and facebook.com/University-Neurosurgery.
The neurosurgery department at LSU Health Shreveport has seen several events worth celebrating throughout the past several months.

Dr. Christopher Storey, PGY-5, received the Top Poster award at the Congress of Neurosurgeons Annual Meeting Oct. 18-22, 2014. Dr. Storey presented a poster on “Outcomes in mechanical thrombectomy and preoperative intravenous tissue plasminogen activator.”

Dr. Richard Menger, PGY-5, was appointed to the Congress of Neurosurgeons Development Committee in February. Dr. Menger will serve a two-year term, representing LSU Health Shreveport at the national level. Dr. Menger was also accepted to the Harvard Kennedy School of Government to pursue a Master’s in Public Administration Degree.

Dr. Justin Haydel, recent residency graduate, married Beverly Moore in June in Aspen, Colorado.

Dr. Menarvia Nixon, PGY-6, married Justin Gaddis in the Bahamas in May.

Assistant Professor Dr. Christina Notarianni has been promoted to Residency Program Director. Dr. Notarianni previously served as Residency Program Assistant Director.

Professor and Chairman Dr. Anil Nanda was invited to visit Kuwait by the Kuwait Ministry of Health. Dr. Nanda operated and lectured while there.

Assistant Professor and Director of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery Dr. Jessical Wilden was honored at An Evening for Healers, a ceremony sponsored by the LSU Health Foundation. The foundation honored three patients and three healing teams, including Dr. Wilden, University Neurosurgery Physician Assistant Ashley Hamby, University Neurosurgery Registered Nurse Mike Shepard, and Dr. Richard Menger, PGY-5.

Associate Professor Dr. Anthony Sin was an invited speaker at the 3rd Annual Meeting for 4 University Spine Symposium hosted by Keio University in Tokyo, Japan.

Professor and Chairman Dr. Anil Nanda was invited as a visiting professor to Yale University and the University of California at Los Angeles.

Associate Professor Dr. Bharat Guthikonda served on the planning committee for the North American Skull Base Society’s annual meeting. He also worked as Course Co-Director for the operative, hands-on courses before the conference.

Assistant Professor and Residency Program Director Dr. Christina Notarianni was honored as one of the Top 40 Young Professionals Under 40 by the Young Professionals Initiative.
University Neurosurgery held its Third-Annual Woodard Symposium Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2014 at LSU Health Shreveport. The intercontinental colloquium brings together diverse figures of neurosurgery from across the globe.

Dr. Vladimír Beneš, Professor of Neurosurgery at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, discussed “AVM: How I Do It.” Dr. Rashid Jooma, Professor of Neurosurgery at Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan, lectured on “Can Health Cover Bring Equity in Access to Heal Care? The View from Pakistan.” Dr. Claudio Yampolsky, Chairman and Professor of Neurosurgery at Hospital Italiano in Buenos Aires, Argentina, spoke about “Neuropathic Pain and Motor Cortex Stimulation.”

Approximately 75 people attended the symposium, including physicians, physician assistants, residents, nurses, physical therapists, medical students, and public health students.

The Woodard Symposium is made possible by the Scotty and Larene Woodard Woodard Professorship. Seven years ago, an aneurysm threatened Larene Woodard’s life. A coiling operation at LSU Health Shreveport kept the aneurysm from bursting. Thanks to the Woodards, the physicians and staff at LSU Health Shreveport, as well as community members and other health professionals, have access to visiting lecturers’ knowledge and expertise.

Gray Matters Offers Updates in Neurosurgery and Neurology

The Departments of Neurosurgery and Neurology cohosted Gray Matters | Neuro Update 2015, an update in various areas of neurosciences, Feb. 7 at LSU Health Shreveport. Nearly 100 people attended the conference, with topics ranging from headache treatment to deep brain stimulation.

Dr. Jean Regis, an internationally recognized neurosurgeon specializing in stereotactic surgery, traveled from Marseille, France, serving as the featured speaker. Dr. Regis spoke on Gamma Knife radiosurgery, a minimally invasive surgery offered at University Neurosurgery. He heads the Department of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery and Radiosurgery at Aix Marseille University. Dr. Alejandro A. Rabinstein, a critical care neurology specialist from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., was the conference’s guest speaker, sharing updates in stroke and critical care. Dr. Rabinstein is a professor in the Department of Neurology at the Mayo Clinic.

Seven members of the University Neurosurgery faculty lectured, sharing their expertise with physicians, physician assistants, residents, nurses, and nursing students. Conference attendees from Shreveport-Bossier to Natchitoches to Texarkana learned about updated techniques and treatments to better serve patients.
First described in the 1890s, Chiari malformations are a spectrum of congenital abnormalities of the cerebellum and brainstem. There are 4 types of Chiari malformations and each are separate anatomic entities all involving the hindbrain. By far the most prevalent malformation is the Chiari 1 malformation.

Chiari 1 malformations are characterized by caudal displacement of the cerebellar tonsils into the upper cervical spinal canal. The incidence of tonsillar ectopia and Chiari 1 malformations is reported to be 0.5-3%. There is a slight female predominance. Many Chiari 1 malformations are found incidentally on imaging performed for other reasons, often concussion. The presence of a Chiari 1 malformation does not necessarily mean a surgical intervention is needed; however, referral to a neurosurgeon for evaluation should be performed.

The best way to diagnose a Chiari malformation is with an MRI of the brain. This will show the degree of tonsil herniation as well as rule out any other pathology in the brain that could cause a Chiari malformation (i.e.: hydrocephalus, tumor). Most neurosurgeons will also perform an MRI of the entire spine to evaluate for a syrinx in the spinal cord or other possible causes of a Chiari malformation (i.e.: tethered cord). Some patients with Chiari malformations will have a syrinx or dilation within the spinal cord itself. It is thought this is due to altered hydrostatic pressures at the foramen magnum.

Surgery is offered to patients who have symptomatic Chiari malformations or an asymptomatic Chiari malformation with the presence of a spinal cord syrinx. Symptomatic Chiari malformations are patients who are experiencing occipital headaches that are worse with Valsalva maneuvers, neck pain, arm pain, numbness or tingling, difficulty swallowing, gagging, or coughing. Surgery is performed to decompress the cervicomedullary junction, making more room for the cerebellum and to restore normal CSF outflow at the foramen magnum. Most patients spend about 3-5 days in the hospital after surgery and are able to resume all normal activities at 6-8 weeks after surgery.
Richard Menger, MD  
PGY-5 Resident

World War I catapulted the United States from historical isolationism to international involvement in a major European conflict. Woodrow Wilson’s vision involved a permanent United States imprint on democracy in world affairs through participation in the League of Nations.

Amidst these defining historical events, Woodrow Wilson suffered a major ischemic stroke on Oct. 2, 1919 leaving him incapacitated. His likely fourth and most devastating stroke was diagnosed and treated by his personal physician, United States Navy Admiral, and friend Dr. Cary Grayson. Grayson, who held tremendous personal and professional loyalty to Wilson, kept hidden the severity of the stroke from Congress, the American people, and even the President himself. Grayson, during a cabinet briefing, refused to formally sign a document of disability and was reluctant to address capacity for presidential succession. Wilson was essentially incapacitated and hemiplegic, yet he remained as an active President and all presidential messages were relayed directly through the President’s wife, Edith Wilson. Patient-physician confidentiality superseded national security amidst the backdrop of friendship and political power on the eve of a pivotal juncture in the history United States foreign policy.

It was because of the absence of Woodrow Wilson’s vocal and unwavering support that the United States did not join the League of Nations and distanced itself from the international stage. The League of Nations would later prove powerless, without American support, and unable to thwart the rise and advance of Adolf Hitler. Only after World War II did the United States assume its global leadership role and Wilson’s visionary yet contentious groundwork for a Pax Americana was realized.

In our work, we teamed up with Pulitzer Prize-nominated Wilson biographer John Milton Cooper to describe the events of Woodrow Wilson’s stroke, the historical implications of his health decline, and its impact on United States foreign policy.

“Woodrow Wilson’s hidden stroke of 1919: the impact of patient-physician confidentiality on United States foreign policy” by Dr. Richard Menger, Dr. Christopher Storey, Dr. Bharat Guthikonda, Dr. Symeon Missios, Dr. Anil Nanda, and John Milton Cooper will be published in Neurosurgical Focus.
University Neurosurgery Professor Honored

Clinical Professor Dr. Donald Smith was honored at the Louisiana Neurosurgical Society Annual Meeting on Jan. 17 in New Orleans. Dr. Smith received an award for his leadership and contributions to organized medicine in North Louisiana.

Dr. Richard Menger, PGY-5, Assistant Professor Dr. Christina Notarianni, and Susan Steen, Dr. Smith’s physician assistant, presented the award to Dr. Smith, sharing stories of his encouragement and teaching over the years.

Dr. Smith’s wife and daughter attended the ceremony.

Dr. Smith has served as a pivotal figure in Louisiana neurosurgery since 1977. He first came to LSU Health Shreveport in 1977, working part time and in the private sector. He joined LSU Health Sciences Center full-time in 1996. He was part of the search team to hire neurosurgery leadership for the medical school, helping to recruit Dr. Anil Nanda in 1990.

Dr. Smith is a retired member of the U.S. Air Force Reserves, holding the rank of Colonel.