

MOMENTS

IN OTOLARYNGOLOGY

University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Chairman's Update

with Dr. Jonas Johnson

I am pleased to introduce the inaugural edition of "Moments in Otolaryngology," an alumni newsletter from the Department of Otolaryngology and the Eye & Ear Foundation at the University of Pittsburgh. We're thrilled to have a new avenue to stay connected with our alumni and are excited to share departmental updates as well as professional and personal news from your peers and fellow alumni. I urge all of you to stay connected and up to date with our new alumni update page, highlighted at the end of this newsletter.

Everyone knows that the Academic Year runs July through June. Each June, we congratulate our resident graduates as they head off toward their futures while we welcome the incoming residents. It comes as no surprise that the class of 2020 was required to take a vary altered route to graduation. We did hold a scaled-down "face to face" ceremony for the five graduating residents and a small group of faculty (in keeping with the Governor's restrictions on event size and the requirement for masks).

Residency in Otolaryngology requires a minimum of five years of training after completion of medical school. We have welcomed five new doctors to our team. The challenge is to develop an in-depth understanding of normal function and diseases of the Ears, Nose, and Throat. At the same time, these young doctors are expected to learn when and how to operate. This simple introduction overlooks the fact that one of the most well-used texts on ENT runs 4000 pages. We also have over ten journals that publish new information

monthly. The latest scientific data tends to make the best textbooks a little obsolete shortly after publication.

Accordingly, the most significant challenge for every modern doctor is to keep up with changes in biomedical information. It is true, we do deal with "the same old diseases," but as we learn more about the molecular events behind the disease, we see an opportunity for new understanding and novel treatments. Every year we learn of new approaches to care for people. We have an extensive program of continued medical education, which helps us all keep up with fast-moving science.

Needless to say, all of this has been derailed by the arrival of the COVID-19 virus. We suddenly found ourselves in need of multiple revised approaches to both patient care and education. Our research was shut down for close to ten weeks. During March and April,



Jonas Johnson, MD, FACS

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ENT was off over 80% inpatient care as we responded to directives to delay and postpone whatever could be safely delayed or postponed. We did continue to provide care (including surgery) to patients who would be harmed by a delay. This was especially true for cancer care. We embraced the need for telemedicine, and we acknowledged the shortcomings of trying to help people without actually seeing and examining them. In June, the hospitals had set up screening protocols with masking and social distancing guidelines, which has allowed us to gradually return to a semblance of our former "normal." With guidelines from the Chancellor's office, the research labs have opened once again.

We moved into virtual meetings almost immediately. The entire Department meets weekly for virtual "Grand Rounds" and "Patient Safety Conferences." Multidisciplinary Tumor Conference has been reformatted to a virtual platform so that all of the doctors from Shadyside, the Hillman Cancer Center, the Oakland campus, and across the UPMC system can see the various scans and participate in discussions of the most challenging issues. Most of our teaching in the clinic, at the bedside, and in the operating room has restarted with the availability of COVID-19 testing and abundant provision of personal protective equipment.

The expectation is that the Pandemic will be with us until a safe and effective vaccine has been widely administered. In the meantime, medicine will evolve with it as we continue to stay on the cutting edge of health care.

Sincerely,

*Jonas T. Johnson, MD, FACS
Distinguished Service Professor
and Chairman
The Department of Otolaryngology
The Eugene N. Myers Endowed Chair
University of Pittsburgh School of
Medicine*

From the Desk of Dr. Schaitkin

Hello to everyone,

Everyone here in Pittsburgh hopes that you are staying safe and sane during these most trying times. Certainly, we have had to pivot and pivot again to maintain patient care and resident education to our standards, as I am sure all of you have. Before COVID-19, Dr. Noel Jabbour and I had arranged for a planned transition of power for the position of Residency Program Director. Beginning this winter, as many of you know, I will be stepping down. Noel, who has been the Assistant PD will take over as Program Director. I will remain on in an advisory capacity helping him with the transition until such time as he would like to select his own Assistant PD. It has been my greatest pleasure over the years to have either gotten to know you or actually impacted your training. Thank you all so much over the years for all your support.

As we venture into the fall, we will, of course, be interviewing for a new class of ENT residents. This recruitment cycle, like everything else, will be like no other that we have encountered. The first change was that all visiting clerkships for fourth-year students were canceled, and of course, all medical student interviews will now be virtual. As you can imagine, it is causing some stress on both sides to reinvent this



Barry M. Schaitkin, MD

wheel. We want to establish some new methods so that both sides receive some upside to the process, and we may even call on you for your help in the process.

Finally, in the news, we are planning to offer our Alumni to "attend" our Grand Rounds virtually. Our thinking, beyond the CME benefit, is the chance to hear what is new from many of your favorite educators that play in your head anyhow.

Wishing you and your families the best moving forward to the other side.

All my best,

*Barry M. Schaitkin, MD
Professor, Department of Otolaryngology
Program Director, Otolaryngology Residency
Program
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine*

First Year Otolaryngology Residents



Kelly Daniels, MD

Medical School: Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University



Nicholas Fung, MD

Medical School: Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



Lauren Gardiner, MD

Medical School: Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine



Nathan Lu, MD

Medical School: Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine



Terral Patel, MD

Medical School: Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine

Otolaryngology Newer Faculty



Reema K. Padia, MD

*Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Research Director, Vascular Anomalies Center at UPMC Children's hospital of Pittsburgh*

Dr. Padia joined the faculty at UPMC Children's Hospital September 2018. Prior to joining the faculty, she completed her Pediatric Otolaryngology Fellowship at the Seattle Children's Hospital, Seattle, WA in July 2018. She is the author of numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals and has given presentations at local and national conferences. Her special focus is on vascular anomalies and airway/aerodigestive disorders. Dr. Padia has submitted several NIH grants as principal or co-principal investigator.



Shaum S. Sridharan, MD

*Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology,
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine*

Dr. Sridharan joined the department in 2017 as a Clinical Instructor of Otolaryngology. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his medical degree from University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. After completing his residency, Dr. Sridharan completed two fellowships; a Fellowship in Laryngology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and a Fellowship in Head and Neck Oncology and Microvascular Reconstruction at the Medical University of South Carolina.



Mark Kubik, MD

*Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine*

Mark Kubik, MD graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2009 and then received his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine. He completed his residency in Otolaryngology at the University of Pittsburgh before pursuing a fellowship in Head and Neck Oncologic and Microvascular Surgery at the Medical University of South Carolina. Following fellowship, he joined the faculty as an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center with joint appointments in Otolaryngology and Plastic Surgery.

Department of Otolaryngology at the University of Pittsburgh

PHYSICIAN FACULTY

Cuneyt M. Alper, MD

Professor of Otolaryngology
Professor of Clinical and Translational
Science
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Director, ENT Research Laboratory, UPMC
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

David H. Chi, MD

Associate Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh
Chief, Division of Pediatric Otolaryngology
Medical Director, The Hearing Center and
Cochlear Implant Program
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC

Joseph E. Dohar, MD

Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh
Medical Director, Pediatric Voice,
Resonance and Swallowing

Umamaheswar Duvvuri, MD, PhD, FACS

Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh
Medical Director, Pittsburgh CREATES
Program Director, Advanced Training
Fellowship Program in Head & Neck
Oncology
Director of Robotic Surgery, Division of
Head and Neck Surgery

David E. Eibling, MD

Professor of Otolaryngology
Assistant Chief of Surgery, VA

Robert L. Ferris, MD, PhD

Director, UPMC Hillman Cancer Center
Hillman Professor of Oncology
Associate Vice Chancellor for Cancer
Research
Co-Director, Tumor Microenvironment
Center
Professor of Otolaryngology, of
Immunology, and of Radiation Oncology

Joseph M. Furman, MD, PhD

Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Chief, Division of Balance Disorders

Grant Gillman, MD

Associate Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Director, Division of Facial Plastic &
Reconstructive Surgery

Bridget Hathaway, MD

Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Barry E. Hirsch, MD

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University Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Director, Neurotology Fellowship Program
Division Chief, Neurotology/Otology

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Director, Pediatric Otolaryngology
Fellowship Program
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
Director, Congenital Ear Center
Assistant Director, Residency Program

Jonas T. Johnson, MD, FACS

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Oncology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Professor, Department of Oral and
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University of Pittsburgh School of Dental
Medicine
Professor, Communication Science and
Disorders
School of Health and Rehabilitation
Sciences
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University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Interim Director, Department of
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University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Co-Director, Hearing Center, Division of
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Residency Program Director
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Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Surgical Director of Pediatric Thyroid Center

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University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Director, University of Pittsburgh Voice Center
Director, Swallowing Disorders Center

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Neurological Surgery
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Co-Director, Center for Cranial Base Surgery
Vice Chair for Quality and Safety

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Amanda Stapleton, MD

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University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Director of Allergy/Rhinology Clinic
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Miriam S Teixeira, MD, PhD

Research Assistant Professor of
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University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Medical Director of the Middle Ear
Physiology Lab

Allison B.J. Tobey, MD

Assistant Professor of
Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Director of Tracheostomy Care Educational
Program
Co-Director of EXIT Simulation Program
Co-Director, Aerodigestive Center

Eric W. Wang, MD

Associate Professor of Otolaryngology,
Neurological Surgery, and Ophthalmology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Vice Chair for Clinical Operations,
Department of Otolaryngology
Chief, Maxillofacial Trauma, Department of
Otolaryngology

David E. Wood, DO

Staff Otolaryngologist-UPMC Horizon
Medical Director, Otolaryngology UPMC-
Horizon

**CLINICIAN & RESEARCH
FACULTY****Carey Balaban, PhD**

Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Director, Center for National Preparedness

Jackie L. Gartner-Schmidt, PhD, CCC-SLP

Professor of Otolaryngology, University of
Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Adjunct Professor, Communication
Sciences and Disorders
School of Health and Rehabilitation
Sciences, University of Pittsburgh
Co-Director of the University of Pittsburgh
Voice Center
Director of Speech-Language Pathology –
Voice Division
Director of the UPMC Clinical Voice
Research Lab
Co-Director of Vocal Outreach Program at
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Directorships: Audiology

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Professor and Vice Chairman of Research
Department of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Tamara Wasserman-Wincko, MS, CCC-SLP

Director, Speech-Language Pathology
Division

Bill Yates, Ph.D.

Professor of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Co-Director of Research Conduct and
Compliance Office
Vice-Chair of the School of Medicine
Curriculum Committee

**[To view the Faculty list that
includes photos and bios,
click here.](#)**

New Otolaryngology Fellows



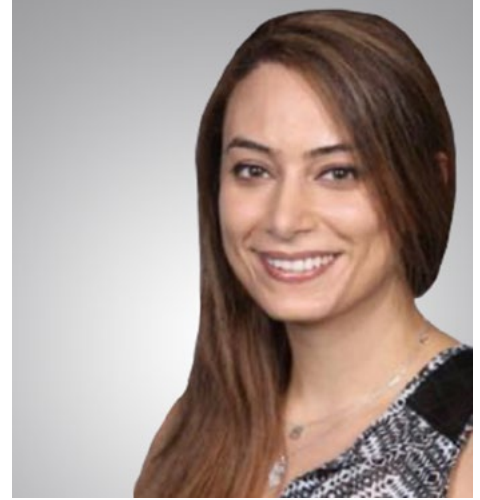
Marco Mascarella, MD

*Head and Neck Fellow 2020-2021
Residency: McGill University
Medical School: McGill University*



Vijay Patel, MD

*Rhinology and Cranial Base Surgery Fellow
2020-2021
Residency: Penn State Health Milton S.
Hershey Medical Center
Medical School: Penn State College of
Medicine*



Nadine Haykal, MD, MPH

*Pediatric Otolaryngology Fellow 2020-2021
Residency: Jacobs School of Medicine and
Biomedical Sciences University at Buffalo,
State University of New York
Medical School: Texas Tech Health
Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of
Medicine*



Varun Vendra, MD

*Head and Neck Fellow 2020-2021
Residency: Stanford University
Medical School: Washington University in
St. Louis*



Uma Ramaswamy, MD

*Rhinology and Cranial Base Surgery Fellow
2020-2021
Residency: University of Texas McGovern
Medical School
Medical School: University of Texas
McGovern Medical School*



Philip Perez, MD

*Neurotology Fellow 2019-2021
Residency: University of California San
Francisco
Medical School: Washington University in
St. Louis*

OTO Alumni Spotlight

Jeffrey N. Myers, MD, PhD

Oto-HNS Resident Class of 1996

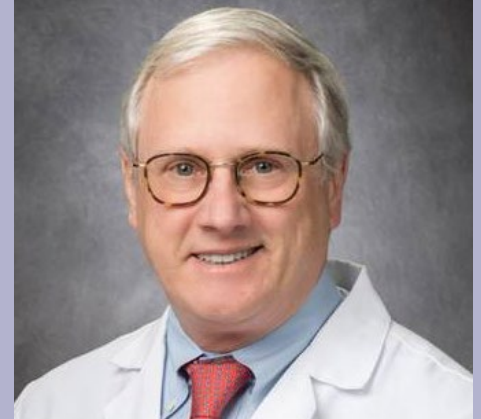
After completing my MD and PhD in Biochemistry at Penn in 1991, my wife Lisa and I moved from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, and I started my Surgical Internship at UPMC on July 1. Though it was a stressful year with lots of new responsibility, it was also a great year as I transitioned from being a 'lab guy' to becoming a 'real doctor'. Many great mentors and colleagues helped me through the year, and we welcomed our first son Keith to the world at Magee Hospital in January of 1992. We became very friendly with the residents in the Oto-HNS program in the year ahead of me, and their wives, the Nissims, Shoemakers, and Dettlebachs that year, and as I entered the Oto-HNS Residency in July of that year we became very close to my fellow residents Anna Pou, Mary Mitskavich, and Craig Buchman.

I started right away on the Head and Neck, and survived as my Chief, Dr. Demetrios 'Taki' Skedros, mentored me and modeled the way. What a remarkable surgeon, leader, and person: truly one of a kind! The rest of the time in the program flew by and I had so many great teachers, mentors, and colleagues in my fellow residents, fellows, and faculty. Little did I know then, that our Head and Neck/Skull Base Fellow, Dr. Ehab Hanna would become a partner in practice and fellow faculty member at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. The last thing I ever expected was to spend the next quarter of a century (and counting) in Texas. The truth is I had never heard of MD Anderson until my chief resident, Dr. Elizabeth Blair, told me she was going there for fellowship and I then applied. Few things since my wedding to Lisa Kaplan in 1990, or after, changed my life in so many positive ways.

Lisa and I arrived in Houston, Texas in June of 1996 with Keith and our middle son, Brett,

also born at Magee (in 1995), ready for me to start a one-year fellowship in Head and Neck Surgical Oncology at The UT MD Anderson Cancer Center. Not expecting to stay for more than a year, I was surprised to get an offer to join the faculty from the Department's Chair, Dr. Helmuth Goepfert. I took him up on the offer and fully engaged in the Multi-Disciplinary Management of Head and Neck Cancer and came to appreciate the hot Houston weather. In 2000 our third son, Blake, was born. Blake is a native Texan who refuses to root for the Steelers, and it is just this sort of desire for individual freedom that I have come to associate with Texans for better or worse (think refusing to wear a mask during a pandemic 😊).

During my time at MD Anderson, I have had the opportunity to live out my dream of being a Physician-Scientist, which had been on my mind since I had applied to Penn's MD PhD program as an undergraduate. I have run a funded laboratory for over two decades that was one of the first to characterize the genomic landscape of head and neck squamous cell carcinoma, and recently described how tumors and neurons interact in the tumor microenvironment to promote tumor growth. I have also been able to make an impact on the lives of cancer patients in the clinic, operating room, and hospital with a wide array oncologic and otolaryngologic problems, and to teach and mentor fellows, residents, and students in the clinic, OR, and laboratory. Overall, it has been more satisfying than I ever imagined, and I attribute the success I have enjoyed to the foundational experience of my residency in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and at Eye and Ear Institute, Presbyterian, Montefiore, Allegheny General, the Veteran's Administration, and Children's Hospitals in Pittsburgh, working with surgeons who taught me to always put the patient before everything else and how to be accountable for my words and actions.



Jeffrey N. Myers, MD, PhD

In 2017, I was named Chair of the Department of Head and Neck Surgery at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, and I continue to model myself on the many outstanding physicians, excellent teachers, and strong leaders I got to know and work with in Pittsburgh, including my father, Professor Eugene Myers. Our son Keith is currently completing his 4th year of medical school at Temple University and is applying for his residency in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and destined to be the 4th generation Myers Otolaryngologist-Head and Neck Surgeon in the "Rhynasty".

In the past several years, I have been back to visit the Department in Pittsburgh several times. In 2018 I enrolled in Drs. Snyderman, Wang, and Gardner's outstanding "Pittsburgh Course: Complex Endoscopic Endonasal Surgery of the Skull Base", where I was very happy to sit in class next to my fellow resident, Dr. David Shoemaker. I have also served as an external peer reviewer for the Eye and Ear Foundation's biennial review of the Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Cancer Research Program, that it supports. Thank you to all my residency colleagues and teachers for your friendship, collaboration, and mentorship. The years with you shaped me to be the practitioner of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and person I am today.



The University of Pittsburgh Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Residency Class of 1996. From left to right, Liz and Craig Buchman, Lisa and Jeff Myers, Gary Wnorowski (Mary's husband) Anna Pou, Mary Mitskavich, and Vince Penapinto (Anna's husband). (Park City, Utah 2017)

Survivorship – A New Model of Care

by Jonas Johnson, MD, FACS

It was through a series of intercepting occurrences that the UPMC Survivorship Clinic in Head and Neck Cancer has evolved. Circa 2014, I was working with Dr. Marci Nilsen, RN, PhD, on a post-doctoral project helping voice impaired patients communicate. At the same time, we were coming to terms with the epidemic of patients afflicted with HPV related oropharyngeal cancer. The improved cancer control observed with chemoradiation therapy for HPV related cancer was being offset by the burden of treatment-related consequences.

Dr. Nilsen called attention to the directive from the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine), urging a program of survivorship directed at and for cancer survivors. The backbone of this program was the mission to go beyond surveillance and cancer prevention. What was needed were improved methods of assessment for treatment-related toxicities and coordination of long-term care for these survivors.

Medicine had established the validity of Patient-Reported Outcome (PRO) instruments. These allow patients to respond to questionnaires (usually administered on an electronic tablet), which have been developed and field-tested (validated) in populations of patients. As a head and neck surgeon, it has long been apparent to me that dysphagia, dry mouth, dental loss, and chronic pain were commonly encountered after successful treatment. The opportunity to develop a

multidisciplinary clinic for head and neck survivors was appealing.

Our goal was to provide assessment through the administration of appropriate PRO instruments. Next, we wanted to have providers, such as an SLP, a Physical Therapist, and a dentist immediately available. It is crucial to screen for hearing loss at each visit because we know of the ototoxic effects of the most commonly employed chemotherapeutics. The literature told us of the prevalence of anxiety and depression of cancer survivors. Accordingly, a behavioral health expert was recruited.

The key component of this Clinic was that every patient would respond to this series of PRO instruments before entering the exam room. Then, while the audiology assistant did the hearing screen, the nurse read and scored the responses to the PRO's. Dr. Nilsen would then interview the patient (with the knowledge of responses to the PRO's) to better understand the patient's issues. She would then brief me before I examined the patient so that we could prescribe the flow of the clinic visit.

Our initial PRO's surveyed Quality of Life, Anxiety, Depression, Functional Oral Intake Scale (we also use the EAT-10), and neck disability (the Neck Disability Index) We soon added instruments to assess sleep, health literacy, financial toxicity, and caregiver burden. We were concerned that completing the multiple PRO's and seeing several providers would be deemed "too much." We were wrong. Patients have told us that these appointments (sometimes

lasting over 2 hours) were welcome and valuable. Our strategy of One visit, One Clinic, and One copay has been lauded by patients and caregivers alike. We have funded this approach through the wonderful support of philanthropic patients and local Foundations in partnership with the Eye & Ear Foundation, while we have gradually developed the data to support this as an effective approach to long term chronic care, which may soon be funded by the insurance companies.

Founded in 2016, the Survivorship Clinic will soon celebrate its 4th anniversary. We have had over 2000 visits by over 1000 individuals. These people represent a population of cancer survivors from the time of diagnosis to over 40 years of post-treatment. Almost 90% of the patients report suffering from a treatment-related toxic side effect in the past seven days. Dysphagia, Xerostomia, and pain are the most prevalent challenges. We have modified our efforts multiple times as we have sought to better understand the challenge of being a survivor. We have added other providers to our team, such as a geriatric specialist, another nurse, and a dietician. On multiple occasions, we have recruited volunteer providers, and we have a steady flow of students from several disciplines (including undergraduate students).

The long-term goal is to inform and to develop a new understanding of the biology of treatment-related toxicities while developing new therapies for these chronic problems.

We Want To Hear From You!

With the release of our new alumni newsletter, *MomENTs in Otolaryngology*, we want to keep in touch with our alumni. Please share exciting personal or professional news with fellow alumni in future editions of our newsletter. Have you recently changed jobs? Got married? Published some exciting research? Welcomed a new member into your family? We want to know about it!

To update your contact information or to share personal and professional news, please visit <http://www.otolaryngology.pitt.edu/alumni-class-photos/alumni-updates>.

Webinar Information

Recently, the Eye & Ear Foundation, in conjunction with the Departments of Otolaryngology and Ophthalmology at the University of Pittsburgh, launched a new bi-weekly webinar series entitled "Sights and Soundbites." The webinars are presented by department faculty members and highlight their current research initiatives and treatment strategies. These webinars have proven to be an accessible and interactive way to stay connected with patients, donors, faculty, and alumni during the current COVID-19 shutdowns. If you would like to register to receive webinar invites, please visit www.eyeandear.org/webinars. To view past webinars, please click on the links below:

- [Retinal Degenerations: Light at the End of the Tunnel](#)
- [I'm Not Old, Why Do I Sound It?](#)
- [Age-Related Macular Degeneration](#)
- [Head and Neck Cancer Survivorship Care](#)
- [Restoring Sight by Regenerating the Cornea](#)
- [Untreated Hearing Loss, Social Isolation, and Health Outcomes](#)
- [Horizons in Glaucoma Research](#)
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Please consider a donation to the Eye & Ear Foundation to fund our research and academic efforts.

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