Message from the Chair

Unfortunately, this economic year has been challenging for the world. We hope you have not been too burdened by the times. Despite the above, 2008 has been a growth year for the Department. We anticipate more in 2009. Since June we have added five faculty members. Koichi Masuda, M.D. is a cartilage/disk/biologic researcher who joined the Department as a Professor after years in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and the Department of Biochemistry at Rush Medical College in Chicago. He brought with him literally $1 million or more of grants and has already added to it.

In September Todd Allen, M.D., Ph.D., former UCSD resident, joined the spine service after spending a year at a highly sought-after spine fellowship at Rush. Todd will be full-time at the VA and part-time at UCSD. He will have time set aside to help maintain our spine basic science research efforts.

Bertil (Bat) Smith, M.D., is an orthopaedic foot and ankle surgeon who came at approximately the same time. Bat did his residency at Loma Linda and completed a prestigious foot and ankle fellowship with Michael Coughlin M.D. in Boise, Idaho. Bat has had major experiences in ankle replacement, sports injuries to the foot and ankle, and complex foot and ankle reconstruction.

Anna Kulidjian, M.D., M.S. is an orthopaedic oncologist who came from the University of Toronto residency program followed by an oncology fellowship at Toronto’s Princess Margaret Hospital and the Ontario Cancer Institute with Jay Wunder, M.D., and his team. Additionally, she spent time training with Alan Gross, M.D. learning complex hip reconstructions. Anna will be at the Moore’s Cancer Center, UCSD Medical Centers, and the VA.

In January Eric Rentzen, M.D., Ph.D., another former UCSD resident, joined the hand service. He has completed his hand fellowship, with special training in flap coverage, at the Curtis Hand Center in Baltimore. This was followed by six months as an AO traveling fellow (in trauma). Eric will not only add more capabilities to what Reid Abrams, M.D. and Matt Meunier, M.D. do in hand surgery (shoulder to hand), but enhance our trauma service’s abilities to provide more rapid coverage of open wounds.

Last year Paul Girard, M.D. joined us after spending five years on the faculty at Balboa Naval Medical Center in San Diego. Paul specializes in trauma and to some degree general orthopaedics. Paul has taken charge of our M&M conferences and our quality assurance programs through the Medical Center.

In the process of adding faculty, we have had two major losses to UCSD (but not necessarily to the training program). Scott Meyer, M.D. went from Head of Joint Reconstructions at UCSD to be the Chief of Orthopaedics at the VA. Scott is doing as much, if not more joints there, and has taken the reins from Dr. Akeson. In October 2008, Dr. Akeson officially retired from the VA. The VA sponsored their first ever “gala” to honor one individual, as we have all done over the years to the same individual. Dr. Akeson will be in an office on campus and also have an office at the VA if he desires. We look forward to his continued involvement at UCSD, through participating at our conferences, contributing his research/clinical expertise, and just by being around. We hope he will still spend more time with us than with his garden and tomatoes.

Importantly, two new facilities are now available to us. We now have a same-day surgery center in the La Jolla/UTC area. All of our surgeons performing outpatient surgery are doing cases there now, and efficiency has improved dramatically since the anesthesiologists, nurses and staff are private. Separately, the University has acquired a new research building in the Torrey Pines Research Park area where all of our basic science research will now be housed. We have more space and importantly, a home for Orthopaedic research at UCSD. We wish you all the best and success for the New Year. We truly hope that the economy will not impact your ability to come to the AAOS. At the Annual Alumni Reception on February 27, 2009 in Las Vegas, we will formerly honor Dr. Akeson with a ‘toast’ and hope you all can be there.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Garfin, M.D.
Professor and Chair

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Events and Meetings

**AAOS Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV**
**February 25th – 28th**
The UCSD Akeson Alumni Association Reception:  
Friday, February 27th from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
RA Sushi Bar and Restaurant
3200 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Suite 1132
On the Strip at Fashion Show Mall about one block from the Convention Center across from the Wynn Hotel
There will be a special toast to Dr. Akeson at 7:00pm during this reception from Dr. Steve Garfin, Dr. Peter Newton, Dr. Scott Meyer, and Dr. Bjorn Rydevik.

The Alumni Reception at last year’s AAOS in San Francisco was awesome with good turn-out. It’s always great to get all the past and present residents and faculty together with good food and plenty of drink. Don’t miss it this year!

**WOA, San Diego Chapter, Annual Meeting**
**Friday, January 23, 2009**
The Annual WOA, San Diego Chapter meeting will be held at the Hyatt Mission Bay (formerly Islandia) starting at 7:30 am. The visiting professor is Brad Currier, MD, Spine surgeon from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. An excellent program has been planned with a diversity of orthopaedic subspecialty subjects covered.
* CME credit will be available.

**UCSD 2008 Annual Visiting Professor**
Dr. Ken Yamaguchi, internationally respected Shoulder and Upper Extremity specialist from Washington University in St. Louis, was the 2008 UCSD Annual Visiting Professor. This visiting professorship is made possible by generous donations from the **Yuan family** (family of Phil Yuan ’03). Dr. Yamaguchi participated in the residents’ Journal club and gave a few lectures at Grand Rounds, sharing his wealth of knowledge on rotator cuff disease from diagnosis to repair techniques to the importance of biological healing. The residents presented multiple complex shoulder and elbow cases, and he gave his insight and recommendations; explaining the **Yamaguchi way** to tackle such cases.

Following the conferences, Dr. Y and the residents spent the afternoon sailing in the San Diego Bay. He had never previously skippered a vessel but handled the helm quite well. The trip was extended 20 minutes when the boat ran aground under the Coronado bridge. Of course, one of the residents was at the helm when this happened.

The visiting professorship concluded with dinner at the Grande Colonial in La Jolla. Dr. Yamaguchi gave an entertaining and informative talk on psychological and personality profiling of medical students in the resident selection process. All of the UC San Diego faculty listened intently and a couple of us even took notes…
What’s New at the U?

A number of new faculty have been added to the UCSD Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in this past year:

R. Todd Allen, MD, PhD, who graduated from UCSD orthopaedic program in 2007, completed a fellowship in Spine Surgery at Rush University in Chicago and joined the faculty part-time at the University and part-time at the VA.

P. Bertil (‘Bat’) Smith, MD is our new Foot and Ankle specialist. He trained at Loma Linda University and completed fellowship training with Michael Coughlin in Boise, Idaho.

Anna Kulidjian, MD joined the faculty in October 2008 specializing in Musculoskeletal Oncology and Joint Reconstruction. She completed orthopaedic residency at the University of Toronto, and fellowship at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

Professor Koichi Masuda, MD has come to UC San Diego from Rush University in Chicago. He has extensive research experience in spine, tissue engineering and gene therapy.

Eric Hentzen, MD, PhD, who graduated from UCSD orthopaedic program in 2007, completed a Hand Surgery fellowship at the Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, MD and will be returning to UC San Diego and part-time at the VA in January 2009.

What’s New at the U?

Our residents continue to perform at an exceptional level, representing our program locally and nationally. Check out their accomplishments over the last year:

Jared Foran (Class of ’09):
- Nominated by Department to attend AOA Resident leadership Conference in Quebec, Canada.
- Nominated by Residents to be 2008/09 Administrative Chief Resident.

Andrew Pennock (Class of ’09):
- Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons scholarship to attend the 40th Annual Orthopaedic Educator’s Course.

Neil Badlani (Class of ’11):
- Western Orthopaedic Association 2008 Vernon Thompson Resident Award. ($2000)
- California Orthopaedic Association 2008 J. Harold LaBriola, M.D. Resident Award. ($2000)

Brooke Ballard (Class of ’12):
- Orthopaedic Trauma Association’s Resident Research Grant. ($10,000)

The Spine Service at UCSD continues to be a hotbed of activity, both clinically and in research. In collaboration with Koichi Masuda, we are exploring mesenchymal stem cells as a vehicle to improve bone healing / fusion. Additionally, we continue to have an active clinical trials program. An interesting trial which we have begun is assessing a functional anesthetic discogram. This is a device and method that allows us to understand the source of a patient’s low back pain by inserting a catheter in the disc and allowing the patient to move around to recreate their pain. Through better diagnostic tools, such as this, we hope to improve the outcomes of spine surgery by better selection of patients. We have trials underway exploring a new cervical disc replacement as well as a trial evaluating the outcomes of cervical spine fusions for disc herniations, which is part of the NIH sponsored SPORT trial. Lastly, we continue to be leaders in the field of minimally invasive spine surgery.

Rick Lieber, PhD, who is the Research Chair in the department, continues to establish very successful collaborations with the clinicians. Dr. Lieber and Sam Ward, PT, PhD in association with the Spine service, the Hand / Upper Extremity service and with the Adult Reconstruction service have been contributing to our understanding of the relationship between muscle architecture and function. These ongoing projects are helping to explain spinal stability, appropriate muscle/tendon units for transfer and extensor mechanism function in the knee and abductor function in the hip.

Through collaborations such as these, the Department stays at the forefront of orthopaedic research.
The Wayne Akeson Legacy

Dr. Wayne Akeson came to U.C. San Diego in the Summer of 1970, recruited by Dr. Marshall Orloff as Professor and Division Head of Orthopaedics. He had completed his medical school and residency at the University of Chicago, and after beginning his academic career at the University of North Carolina he joined the faculty at the University of Washington in 1961. Dr. Akeson flourished at the University of Washington where, led by Dr. Kay Clawson, a department with full time faculty was established. While at the U of W, he began an association with Savio Woo, PhD and David Amiel, PhD.

When Dr. Akeson accepted the position at UCSD, he began a division much like Dr. Clawson had at the University of Washington, building a full time faculty to train the residents. UCSD residents had previously been trained at the County Hospital by outstanding community orthopaedists like Dr. Bruce Kimball and Dr. Sidney Sideman. Both Savio Woo and David Amiel joined Dr. Akeson immediately, and then the Division was built over the years by the addition of many outstanding physicians and researchers.

Dr. Akeson was a true academician – understanding the importance of clinical and basic science research. The UCSD residency program quickly adopted a 6th year, non ACGME accredited, for focused research. He most certainly led by example, accumulating so many academic awards and distinctions over the years that they take up almost 3 pages of his weighty curriculum vitae. Of particular distinction are the Nicolas Andry Award for Orthopaedic Research in 1965 and the Kappa Delta Award for Orthopaedic Research from the AAOS in both 1968 and 1987.

Dr. Akeson was also the consummate leader. In addition to his 26 years of leading UCSD Orthopaedics, he also was the Acting Chairman of the Department of Surgery from 1981-1983 and the Acting Dean of the UCSD School of Medicine from 1986-1988. These positions in particular gave him the broadest scope possible with which to see the future of UCSD Orthopaedics – that being an independent Department within the School of Medicine.

Below are some excerpts from a 12 page letter written by Dr. Akeson in 1989 to the Chairman of the Department of Surgery regarding an initial disapproval of change in status. It clearly shows that Dr. Akeson was a force to be reckoned with.

“It is not possible to respond to the October 6 letter in factual terms without detailing the errors and misconceptions contained in the letter, and without indicating that the analysis is superficial, lacks a balanced, thorough, and dispassionate display of pros and cons, and in some instances is contrived and mean spirited.”

“Frankly, I wonder if the letter should not be withdrawn and reconsidered if the Department (of Surgery) is to come out of this with a modicum of credibility.”

“I will show that timing is of the essence on the affirmative side, and cooperation is as possible between Departments as between Divisions. What is left? Unity! We should discuss how you want to handle it.”

“It seems to me that academic status should be the sine qua non, the gold standard, the raison d’etre of a University Department, and I am disappointed that in the year-long Department review, this aspect of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation at UCSD was given so little consideration. I confidently predict that any unbiased external review would place this section in the top five academic Departments/Divisions in the United States.”

And with this, the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at UCSD was established. And, as predicted, the Department rapidly became one of the most prestigious in the country. After 26 years of leadership Dr. Akeson handed over the reigns as Chairman to Dr. Steve Garfin in 1996. But his accomplishments and leadership to both Orthopaedic Surgery as a specialty and our Department at UCSD did not end there. He immediately took on the responsibility of Orthopaedic Surgery Section Chief at the VA Hospital and continued to perform high level bench research and train orthopaedic residents. In 1999 he became Emeritus Professor of Orthopaedics at UCSD.

A few paragraphs cannot even come close to describing the accomplishments of Dr. Akeson and what he has meant to UCSD Orthopaedics, the VA Orthopaedic Section and most impressively, the national and international orthopaedic community. He is a brilliant man and a true GIANT of our specialty. In October of 2008, at the age of 80, and after 50 years of dedication to his specialty, Dr. Akeson retired from the VA. Over a period of 38 years he trained 134 residents here at UCSD and the VA and leaves a legacy that is incomparable in scope and depth. We all wish him the very best in retirement – he most certainly earned it!
### Residents Trained During Dr. Akeson’s Career at UCSD

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His journey took him through the plain inhabited by the Little People, and through the feared Valley of the Shadow of the Vet. He grew weary. And so the seasons passed, and passed, and passed.

The now not-so-young warrior then went to his Lord and beseeched him. “Great Ake, when might I become a Freeman?”

“First, my son,” Ake replied, “Thou must journey to the Shrine of the Lab and toil there many days for the Wizard of Hargens.”

“What is this place you call the Lab,” queried the young warrior, “and how will it help me to know the Soul Of The Bone?”

King Ake’s brow grew furrowed. His eyes narrowed, and he cast his countenance down on the not-so-young warrior. “Son,” he bellowed, “yours is not to question why! Yours is but to do…..or DIE!”

And great beads of sweat poured from the brow of the Serf as he replied, “O.K.”

Thus, the Serf toiled in the Land of the Lab for many moons. And many beasts were slain. Often, upon returning to his grim hovel, the young warrior’s Mistress would cry out to him, “Cease thou these tireless toils! Methinks you’ve lost your mind!”

The young warrior approached him kindly and inquired, “How might I become a brave and fierce Knight of the Realm of ORTHO?”

Ake replied, “Ye who would be Knights, and know the Soul Of The Bone, must first learn the ways of the Scurrilous Knave.”

Thus, the young warrior, strong of will and determination, donned sackcloth and toiled for his masters, the Knights. Their weapons of steel he carried, and their armor he polished, hoping, someday, to find the Soul Of The Bone and do battle as they did. And, so it passed that one day Lord Ake said unto his vassal, “Scurrilous Knave, cast away thy sackcloth and rise ye up as a Serf! Now you may learn the ways of my empire! To guide you will be two of the fairest ladies of my Kingdom, Pat of Morris and Betty of McCoy.”

The young warrior, now proud to be a Serf, set forth on his journey to find the Soul Of The Bone. Many bones he saw along the paths of the Kingdom; bones creaking and smitten by age, bones blown to pieces by missiles hurled by evil men, and, most of all, bones festering with pus… Great gobs of pus!
Alumni Update
Where are they now? What are they doing?

We have four new alumni! In June 2008, four chief residents completed their residency training. Suzanne Steinman, MD took a Pediatric Orthopaedics fellowship at Texas Scottish Rite in Dallas. Bryan Leek, MD took a fellowship in Sports Medicine here in San Diego, and Catherine Robertson, MD went to the Hospital for Special Surgery for a Sports Medicine Fellowship. Robert Talac, MD, PhD went to the Cleveland Clinic for a Spine Fellowship. Oh, and they all passed Step I of their Boards. Congratulations!

In 2008, Dr. William Bugbee ('94) in collaboration with Professor David Amiel and Professor Robert Sah at U.C. San Diego was awarded an R01 NIH grant to explore osteochondral allografts and the in vivo effects of variable cellular viability of the graft.

In 2008, Choll Kim, MD, PhD (’01) was elected president of the San Diego Chapter of the Western Orthopaedic Association. He has helped to arrange the annual visiting professor meeting which is planned for January 23, 2009.

Current Faculty:

Steve Garfin, MD  
Chairman  
Orthopaedic Trauma

Alexandra Schwartz, MD  
Residency Director  
Orthopaedic Trauma

Reid Abrams, MD  
Vice-Chairman  
Joint Reconstruction

R. Scott Meyer, MD  
Chief, VA Medical Center  
Trauma, General

Richard Lieber, PhD  
Research Chair  
Hand, Upper Extremity

Matthew Meunier, MD  
Hand, Upper Extremity  
Shoulder Surgery

Douglas Chang, MD, PhD  
Physical Med & Rehab  
Sports Medicine

Robert Afra, MD  
Interventional Spine

Paul Girard, MD  
Orthopaedic Trauma  
General Orthopaedics

Scott Ball, MD  
Joint Reconstruction

Bertil (Bat) W. Smith, MD  
Foot and Ankle  
Foot and Ankle

Daniel Lee, DPM

R. Todd Allen, MD, Ph.D.  
Spine  
Spine

Yu-Po Lee, MD

David Amiel, PhD  
Connective Tissue  
Musculoskeletal Oncology

Anna A. Kalidjian, MD  
Cartilage  
and Joint Reconstruction

Alan Hargens, PhD  
Physiology  
Hand, Upper Extremity

Eric Hentzen, MD, PhD

Koichi Masuda, MD  
Research in Spine and  
Tissue Engineering

Many of our current residents and faculty at the 2008 Graduation Banquet.
Newsletter Correspondence

Attention Alumni: Please share stories, accomplishments, and pictures with us, and we will do our best to include them in future newsletters. The purpose of this organization and newsletter is to keep alumni and current faculty and residents connected. Correspondence through this newsletter is encouraged. If you wish to share stories or photos, feel free to email them to me. Email may be addressed to Scott Ball, MD at: stball@ucsd.edu.

Thank you Alumni for your generous donations...

$25,000 and above
The Roberts Foundation

Platinum Donors
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These donations are placed in the Resident Alumni Fund. The sole purpose of this fund is for alumni events (primarily the annual AAOS reception) and this alumni newsletter. For the last three years running, the AAOS reception has been complimentary with no dues required. Please consider making at least a modest donation this year. Think about it, a night in Las Vegas with old friends, Asian fusion cuisine, sushi and drinks…priceless! (And yes, you can put it on your MasterCard.) Also, your donation may be tax deductible.

Resident Alumni Fund Donation Information

Enclosed with this newsletter is an addressed, stamped envelope. Annual donations would be appreciated. Generous donations from last year have helped to pay for this newsletter and this year’s AAOS Alumni Reception.

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at UC San Diego makes a sizeable contribution every year and appreciates your donations particularly at this time of year as the annual Alumni Event approaches. Donations may be acknowledged in future newsletters unless you indicate that you would prefer to remain anonymous. Donation categories are as follows:

- Bronze – $50 to $99
- Silver – $100 to $499
- Gold – $500 to $999
- Platinum – $1000 and up

The Department is committed to establishing an Endowed Chair. Such an entity would become a self sustaining source of revenue to support ongoing research efforts and education. In short, an Endowed Chair would elevate our department to a new level of academic independence and create numerous and sustained opportunities for growth and leadership.

If you are interested in learning more about how you may help to support the department or the alumni fund, or if you wish to talk to someone about donations, please call or email Dana Weintraub at:

(619) 471-0485
dweintraub@ucsd.edu.

We look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas at the AAOS in February, 2009 and we appreciate your involvement.

That was then...

This is now...

Drs. Akeson, Amiel, Garfin, Hargens and Lieber still committed to orthopaedic research and education with more than 125 years of service at UC San Diego between them.