

NREF News

May 2016, Number 3

Support of Sections Raises NREF to New Heights

The Development Committee of the Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation (NREF) met during the 2016 American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Annual Scientific Meeting to discuss the many ways Sections, individual neurosurgeons, private and academic group practices, corporate sponsors, state and regional societies and public donors can support the foundation. Comprised of members of each Section, the NREF and AANS Boards of Directors and the Young Neurosurgeons Committee, the role of the Development Committee is to identify, cultivate and steward financial support with individuals, groups and corporations.

During this year's research/fellowship award cycle — for the first time — Sections provided reviewers to score the applications for research grants and fellowships funded by NREF. Eight \$40,000 grants were awarded using funding provided by the American Academy of Neurological Surgery, B*CURED private foundation, the Bagen Family Foundation and Medtronic, as well as the Cerebrovascular, Tumor, Pediatric and Pain Sections.

The creation of the "Honor Your Mentor Funds" has provided opportunities for donors to support the individual purpose of each fund, as developed by the fund originator. As Section support of the funds increases through pledges and donations by individuals, corporations and others, this peer-to-peer program has grown dramatically since its inception in 2014.

We recognize the leadership role taken by the AANS/CNS Section on Disorders of the Spine for their pledge of \$100,000 for the upcoming fiscal year for five NREF "Honor Your Mentor" funds: Stewart Dunsker Fund, Regis Haid Jr. Fund, Charles Kuntz IV Fund, Sanford Larson Fund and Volker K. H. Sonntag Fund.

Consider supporting NREF by spreading the word through your Section about the research, fellowship and education programs that need financial support. NREF's mission is your mission and is an investment in our specialty. Visit the website for a complete list of the "Honor Your Mentor" funds and other ways to contribute: www.nref.org/donate

Sincerely,

Make a Donation

Learn More

Why I Give

Giving to NREF is like teaching a resident: it ensures that I am a valuable link in the chain of neurosurgery that will continue forever. My donation will guarantee that neurosurgery will remain the most educated and well respected discipline in medicine, and it helps make sure that neurosurgical research is high quality and relevant to the work that neurosurgeons do in the trenches every day.

*Michael Groff, MD,
FAANS*

To hear first-hand accounts of why neurosurgeons give to NREF, [watch this one-](#)



Jon H. Robertson, MD, FAANS
NREF Chair

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NREF Shines Spotlight on Donors and Mentors at AANS Annual Meeting

The NREF shined a bright spotlight on donors, mentors and partners during activities at the 2016 AANS Annual Scientific Meeting.

At the NREF Donor Reception, NREF Chairman, Dr. Jon Robertson, welcomed three new members of the Cushing Circle of Giving with pins to new Cushing Level donors: Dr. Arvind Ahuja (donation of \$25,000 to support a CV research grant); Dr. Aaron Cohen-Gadol (royalties from sale of Kirwan disposable forceps to support 10 MSSRF awards for summer 2016); and LANS, the Louisiana Neurosurgical Society. Dr. Robert Heary was welcomed to the Silver Level of the Cushing Circle for his lifetime contributions of \$50,000.

Other notable donors recognized for their contributions, include: Brainlab's \$500,000 pledge to the Andrew Parsa "Honor Your Mentor" Fund; the Bagan Family Foundation's support of a \$40,000 Research Grant; and a group of Chinese neurosurgeons that collectively donated \$8,000 to the Albert Rhoton "Honor Your Mentor" Fund.

Dr. Regis Haid introduced new partnerships with: B*CURED, a non-profit organization based in Greenwich, Conn., whose mission is to end brain cancer, and Ian's Friends Foundation, a non-profit committed to funding the support of pediatric brain tumor research. Representatives from both organizations were in attendance, including Karena Bailey, B*CURED; Kristin Duda, B*CURED; Mary Russell, B*CURED; Melissa Salame, B*CURED; and Phil Yagoda, Ian's Friends Foundation.

Since 2014, 23 Honor Your Mentor funds have been created, including the two newest funds honoring the legacies of two giants of neurosurgery: Dr. John Jane Sr., and Dr. Al Rhoton. Dr. John Jane Jr. and Dr. Eric Rhoton attended the reception and offered their reflections on the contributions of their fathers to the field of neurosurgery.



Pictured (left to right) are: Dr. Regis Haid, Dr. John Jane

[minute video clip.](#)

To view a list of
NREF's Supporters,
[click here.](#)

The NREF also welcomed Dr. Jr., Dr. Eric Rhoton, Dr. Jon Robertson, and Dr. Charles Branch, Jr. Charles Branch Jr., who announced the establishment of an "Honor Your Mentor" fund recognizing the legacy of his father, Dr. Charles L. Branch Sr.

In the Exhibit Hall, mentorship was the theme of the NREF booth. Attendees were invited to answer the question: "Who Is Your Mentor?" by signing a wall of the NREF booth. By sharing the name of their mentor, attendees received a complimentary copy of the limited-edition Rhoton Collection® calendar. By Wednesday afternoon, hundreds of names filled the walls of the NREF booth.



Throughout the meeting, AANS members were interviewed for the NREF "Why I Give" video archive. Footage will be available on the [NREF website](#) and across social media platforms in the weeks to come.

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S. Kathleen Bandt, MD, Selected as 2017 Van Wagenen Fellow



The William P. Van Wagenen Fellowship Selection Committee has announced S. Kathleen Bandt, MD, as the recipient of the 2017 William P. Van Wagenen Fellowship. Dr. Bandt, a Fellow in Epilepsy & Functional Neurosurgery at Yale University, will commence her Van Wagenen fellowship in July 2016.

Dr. Bandt will travel to France, where she will be hosted by Aix-Marseille University. Under the mentorships of Dr. Jean Regis and Dr. Maxime Guy, Dr. Bandt will pursue her research topic of "Functional and Structural Connectivity in Focal Epilepsy as Defined by Advanced MR Techniques." Dr. Bandt's goal is to better understand the physiologic perturbations in network connectivity in human disease by advancing our understanding of human cortical neurophysiology through the study of both direct electrocorticography and noninvasive advanced imaging techniques. With this work, she believes we will not only further the understanding of a variety of disease processes and the role of network connectivity in disease manifestation but also identify novel therapeutic targets for the treatment of these diseases and diversify the ability to provide care for patients beyond that which is already provided.

"I accept this year's Van Wagenen Fellowship with humble gratitude. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to complete my research on epilepsy network connectivity in Marseille, France, and look forward to walking through the doors this opportunity opens for me during my career ahead," said Dr. Bandt.

Awarded annually since 1968, the Van Wagenen Fellowship is offered for post-residency study in a foreign country for a period of 12 months.

Established by the estate of Dr. Van Wagenen, who was one of the founders and the first president of the Harvey Cushing Society, now the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), the fellowship was designed to provide freedom in scientific development without the restrictive limitations usually imposed by many research grants and fellowships.

The Van Wagenen Fellowship will be offered to residents in their PGY6 to allow more planning time for the awardee and the institutions affected. This change will take place for the 2019 grant year. Therefore, in the next grant cycle, which will begin this summer, applications will be accepted from residents in PGY7 for the 2018 year (7/1/17–6/30/18) and from residents in PGY6 for the 2019 grant year (7/1/18–6/30/19).

To support similar research and educational programs, consider a donation to the NREF at www.nref.org/donate.

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NREF and B*CURED Announce First Joint Research Grant Award

The NREF Board of Directors is pleased to announce the awarding of the first B*CURED-NREF Research Grant of \$50,000, funded by B*CURED, for brain cancer research. Applications from junior and senior investigators were considered.



This award was the result of a new partnership established with B*CURED, a non-profit organization based in Greenwich, Conn., whose mission is to end brain cancer. B*CURED was founded in 2008 by Melissa Salamé and Debbie Needle after each lost a parent to brain cancer. To date, B*CURED has awarded 14 grants to investigators searching for a cure for brain cancer at nationally ranked universities and hospitals, and has raised over \$1,500,000.

"On behalf of our organizations, we are delighted to announce that the inaugural recipient of the B*CURED-NREF Research Grant is Dr. Jamie Purzner, who will be conducting research on medulloblastoma (MB), the most common malignant pediatric brain tumor," says Karena Bullock Bailey, co-president of B*CURED.

Dr. Purzner is a resident in the University of Toronto training program for neurosurgery and pursuing a PhD in developmental biology at Stanford University.

"Presenting this award to Dr. Purzner represents the first time B*CURED will be funding research in pediatric cancer, an area that is important to our organization and the donor community. In addition, it allows us to support and train a young brain cancer researcher," says Kristin Balderston Duda, co-president of B*CURED.

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Foundation Announces the Recipients of 2016-2017 Research Grant-Young Clinician Investigator Awards

This month, the NREF announced this year's recipients of the Foundation's Research Grant-Young Clinician Investigator Awards.

"The NREF is grateful to the donors, sponsors and partner organizations who make it possible for us to continue funding groundbreaking neurosurgical research and providing extraordinary educational opportunities for neurosurgeons at all stages of their careers," stated Ennio A. Chiocca, MD, PhD, FAANS, NREF Education Advisory Committee chair.

As the premier funder of neurosurgical studies, the NREF provides funding for studies in basic, translational and patient-oriented clinical research for investigators in North America through two neurosurgical research grant programs annually.

Open to residents only, the **NREF Research Grant** provides training for neurosurgeons who are preparing for academic careers as clinician investigators. Applicants must be physicians who have been accepted into or who are currently in approved residency training programs in neurological surgery in North America.

The **NREF Young Clinician Investigator Award** supports junior faculty who are pursuing careers as clinician investigators. Applicants must be neurosurgeons, with no more than two years from the end of their clinical training, who are full-time faculty in North American teaching institutions.

The **2016-2017 Research Grant and Young Clinician Investigator Award recipients are:**

- **Christopher Alvarez-Breckenridge, MD, PhD**, Massachusetts General Hospital;
- **Han-Chiao Isaac Chen, MD**, University of Pennsylvania;
- **Kimberly Hamilton, MD**, University of Wisconsin-Madison;
- **Mark Alexander Mahan, MD**, University of Utah;
- **Matthew Mian, MD**, Massachusetts General Hospital;
- **Jamie Purzner, MD**, Stanford University School of Medicine;
- **Visish Srinivasan, MD**, Baylor College of Medicine/M.D. Anderson Cancer Center;
- **Ananth Vellimana, MD**, Washington University School of Medicine; and
- **Marcus Zachariah, MD**, Massachusetts General Hospital.

The NREF is responsible for review and approval of grant applications and awards each grant based upon established fellowship program criteria and the needs of the requesting hospital and/or academic institution. The NREF Education Advisory Committee was established to review and approve fellowship grant applications in an independent, unbiased manner. The committee is comprised of neurosurgeons who do not receive financial or other support from the medical device industry. Individuals serving on the committee are volunteers and do not receive compensation from the NREF for their efforts.

The online grant application portal for 2017 Research Grant-Young Clinician Investigator Awards will open in Fall 2016, and donations are accepted year-round at www.nref.org/donate

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Royalty Donations Fund NREF Medical Student Research Fellowships

The NREF Board of Directors has recently received a generous contribution from Aaron Cohen-Gadol, MD, FAANS, from royalties from the sale of the COHEN™ Bipolar Forceps from Kirwan Surgical Products to the Medical Student Summer Research Fund at the NREF. The royalties will provide funding for 10 "Aaron Cohen-Gadol Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships."

"This tremendous gift allows the NREF to continue offering leading-edge training for neurosurgeons at all stages of their careers and fund basic science and clinical research which helps launch research careers and advances patient care," says NREF Chairman Jon H. Robertson, MD, FAANS.

The Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship (MSSRF) program offers fellowships in the amount of \$2,500 to medical students in the U.S. or Canada who have completed one or two years of medical school and wish to spend a summer working in a neurosurgical laboratory mentored by a neurosurgical investigator sponsor who is a member of the AANS. In 2016, a total of 20 fellowships will be awarded.

Annually, these fellowships go to the brightest and most dedicated students, whose research projects are aimed at the better understanding, treatment and prevention of neurological disorders and improved patient care. "These students are the key to the future of neurosurgery, and I look forward to many years of working with the NREF to support their mission to support research and education efforts that enhance and confirm the critical role neurosurgeons play in improving lives," said Dr. Aaron Cohen-Gadol.

The NREF is pleased to announce that the following individuals have been awarded a 2016 Aaron Cohen-Gadol Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship:

- **Patrick M. Flanigan**, University of California San Francisco;
- **Samuel Tomlinson**, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia;
- **Rachel Kalani Greene**, Washington University School of Medicine;
- **Natalie Elizabeth Griffin**, Washington University School of Medicine; Alessandra Hirsch, Columbia University Medical Center;
- **Anadjeet Singh Khahera**, New York University;
- **Daniel Oyon**, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine;
- **Weining Yang**, Toronto Western Hospital;
- **Christopher Marnell**, Weill Cornell Medical College-New York Presbyterian Hospital; and
- **Luke Alan Mugge**, The Ohio State University.

"Dr. Cohen-Gadol's commitment not only sets a terrific example for others to follow but allows us to further harness the power of donor support and build on the upward momentum of the foundation," says Regis W. Haid, Jr., NREF co-chair.

Overall, the NREF awarded 20 Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships this year. The NREF is pleased to announce that the following individuals have also been awarded a 2016 Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship:

- **Claire Collison**, Albany Medical Center;
- **Joseph Scott Hudson**, University of Iowa;
- **Prateek Agarwal**, University of Pennsylvania;
- **Krish Suresh**, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine;
- **William Roberson Johnston**, Washington University St. Louis;
- **Vaidehi Mahadev**, Cleveland Clinic Foundation;
- **Ankush Chandra**, University of California, San Francisco;
- **David J. Cote**, Brigham and Women's Hospital;
- **Michael Mathison**, Washington University School of Medicine; and
- **Erin Elizabeth Good**, GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

The online grant application portal for 2017 Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships will open in Fall 2016. To donate royalties or provide other financial support of the MSSRF program, visit www.nref.org/donate

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Teams Now Registering for the Softball Tournament

The 13th Annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament, hosted by Columbia University, is planned for Saturday, June 11, 2016. This date has been designated as "Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament Day" in the city of New York by Mayor Bill de Blasio, with proceeds benefiting the NREF.

The tournament will feature a field of 32 teams from across the U.S., Canada and Caribbean, and a post-tournament reception will be held in midtown Manhattan for all participants. All AANS members are invited to get involved. For more information regarding the tournament and post-tournament reception, please contact Ricardo J. Komotar, MD, FAANS, at <mailto:rkomotar@med.miami.edu> or Jeffrey N. Bruce, MD, FAANS, at jnb@columbia.edu.

For more information on the tournament or to make a donation, visit www.neurocharitysoftball.org.

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