



Ellen Churchill (right) and her husband, Win, honored her physicians, Gerald Isenberg, MD (left), and Sidney Cohen, MD, with a generous gift to support surgical education.

Grateful Patient, Grateful Students: Churchills' Gift Gives Early Access to Surgical Skill Development

If a medical school has a laparoscopic surgical simulator, it's usually available only to third- and fourth-year students with an interest in the field. At Sidney Kimmel Medical College, students can explore surgery – and build their skills – starting in year one. It's a unique opportunity made possible by the generosity of Ellen Churchill and her husband, Win.

Churchill underwent re-operative intestinal surgery at Jefferson five years ago. Today she remains a grateful patient of Gerald A. Isenberg MD, FACS, Director of Surgical Undergraduate Education, and Program Director, Colorectal Residency, and Sidney Cohen, MD, Co-Director, Gastrointestinal Motility Program.

Churchill lauds Drs. Isenberg and Cohen not only for their clinical expertise, but also for their good hearts: "Both of them give you peace of mind. I have tremendous confidence in them, and in the outstanding care I receive at Jefferson." She says that when Dr. Isenberg told

her how much he believed in the educational value of the laparoscopic simulator, she thought, "What could be better than having young people learn from him?"

The simulator is part of the Simultaneous Curriculum for Advanced Learning and Preparation for Entering Life as a Surgeon (SCALPELS) – a program Dr. Isenberg envisioned and students now run through the Gibbon Surgical Society. As students learn about each organ system in the regular curriculum, SCALPELS offers extracurricular activities related to surgery in each of those systems. Although it's too soon to gauge how it is affecting the pipeline of surgical residents, interest has been strong, with 60 to 70 students, or about 25 percent of the class, participating each year since the program's founding in 2016.

One such student is Elwin Tham, a fourth-year student who is playing a leadership role in SCALPELS and was the first to complete all 40 of

the simulator modules. He praises the program overall and the simulator in particular for helping students gain a better understanding of what it means to be a surgeon. For Tham, the experience cemented his plans to pursue a career in surgery and accelerated his skill development.

"To my knowledge, no other academic institution offers first- and second-year medical students access to a lap sim," says Tham, who presented the SCALPELS curriculum at a national conference. "It's truly a privilege to have this access."

To learn more about supporting surgical education at Jefferson, please contact Kelly Austin in the Office of Institutional Advancement at **215-955-6383** or **Kelly.Austin@jefferson.edu**.

Surgical Solutions

Jefferson Department of Surgery
620 Curtis Building
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Susan Murphy, Writer

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News in Brief



Warren R. Maley, MD, was named the Nicoletti Family Professor of Transplantation Surgery. The Nicoletti family endowed the professorship in 2008 after patriarch Robert Nicoletti's life was saved by a living donor kidney transplant. The living donor was his daughter, Lori Peruto.



Sung Whang, DNP, MSN, CRNP, CTTS, received a Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) from Thomas Jefferson University. She has been a nurse practitioner in the Division of Thoracic Surgery since 2014.



Eighty-four pancreatic cancer survivors attended the 2018 patient symposium.

Save the Date: Jefferson will host the 14th Annual Pancreatic Cancer and Related Diseases Patient Symposium on Saturday, November 16, 2019. The event gives patients and their loved ones an opportunity to connect with expert physicians, scientists and staff and learn about the latest developments in research and treatment. Seating is limited for this free event. Registration is required. Please contact OIA Events at 215-955-9100 or events@jefferson.edu to request an invitation. For more information, visit **Jefferson.edu/PancreasEvent**