

---

2022

## Full Issue: Volume 17, Number 1 - Summer 2022

Follow this and additional works at: <https://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss>

[Let us know how access to this document benefits you](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

(2022) "Full Issue: Volume 17, Number 1 - Summer 2022," *Jefferson Surgical Solutions*: Vol. 17: Iss. 1, Article 9.

Available at: <https://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss/vol17/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Jefferson Digital Commons. The Jefferson Digital Commons is a service of Thomas Jefferson University's [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#). The Commons is a showcase for Jefferson books and journals, peer-reviewed scholarly publications, unique historical collections from the University archives, and teaching tools. The Jefferson Digital Commons allows researchers and interested readers anywhere in the world to learn about and keep up to date with Jefferson scholarship. This article has been accepted for inclusion in *Jefferson Surgical Solutions* by an authorized administrator of the Jefferson Digital Commons. For more information, please contact: [JeffersonDigitalCommons@jefferson.edu](mailto:JeffersonDigitalCommons@jefferson.edu).

# Surgical Solutions

## Jefferson Aortic Center Targets 'Silent Killers' with Individualized Care, Innovative Research



Jacqueline McGee, CRNP, and Konstadinos Plestis, MD, in the shared reception area for the Aortic Center, Angioplasty Center, and Vascular Center at 111 S. 11th Street in Center City.

The experience of 79-year-old Jane Collins illustrates the unique challenges of diagnosing and treating aortic disease. Her experience also demonstrates the value of the Jefferson Aortic Center – one of only a few in the nation to provide this complex care at a high volume.

Like an estimated 95% of people with aortic disease, Collins had no symptoms, and her diagnosis was incidental. An X-ray to explore back pain revealed that she had an abdominal aortic aneurysm, an enlarged area in the lower part of the aorta. Jefferson vascular surgeons determined that the abdominal aneurysm was too small to require intervention at that time and referred her to a cardiologist. The cardiologist performed an echocardiogram that uncovered an even more urgent issue: a large thoracic aortic aneurysm in her ascending aorta. This weakened area in the upper part of this vital blood vessel measured 8.1 cm and put Collins at high risk of dissection (a tear in the lining of the aorta) or rupture (breakage of the vessel). A subsequent CT scan revealed a third aneurysm measuring 5.5 cm in the descending thoracic aorta.

In late September 2021, Collins came to the Jefferson Aortic Center. In less than a week, Konstadinos A. Plestis, MD, who directs the center, operated on the 8.1 cm aneurysm in Collins' ascending aorta and aortic arch, which is in the front of the chest. This complex, open surgery requires the surgeon to remove the

enlarged blood vessel, replace it with a synthetic tube and reimplant the arch vessels into the tube graft so they can supply blood to the brain and arms.

Several months later, Paul J. DiMuzio, MD, who leads the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, inserted a stent graft to repair the smaller 5.5 cm descending thoracic aortic aneurysm through a small incision in her groin. These aneurysms are in the back of the chest and can cause back pain—her initial complaint. The team will continue to monitor the small abdominal aortic aneurysm closely.

"This kind of collaboration epitomizes the Jefferson Aortic Center," Dr. Plestis says.

"We are a destination center for comprehensive, individualized patient care and a focal point for research and education."

Offering patient care in both Center City, Philadelphia and Abington, Penn., the Center collaborates with cardiothoracic surgery, vascular and endovascular surgery, cardiology, interventional cardiology, radiology, genetics, intensivists and other specialties.

Dr. Plestis explains that most patients with aortic aneurysms have familial thoracic aortic aneurysm disease (that is, the disease is present in more than one first-degree relative). For these patients, the Center can recommend genetic evaluation of family members to help assess their risk. The Center also focuses on patients with Marfan syndrome, a congenital condition in which patients are born with faulty connective tissue that can weaken the aorta and need care starting at a relatively young age. He adds that with some patients, there is no clear-cut etiology; they simply develop an aortic aneurysm.

"Aortic aneurysms and ruptures are often called the 'silent killers' because they aren't usually identified until the late stages of disease," Dr. Plestis continues. "We're developing the infrastructure necessary to identify aortic conditions sooner, so that patients can undergo the least invasive interventions possible."

Patients are referred to the Jefferson Aortic Center by cardiologists, primary care physicians and other physicians who find aneurysms through echocardiograms, X-rays, CT scans and other tests. Where appropriate, patients are scheduled for minimally invasive surgery. When an aneurysm

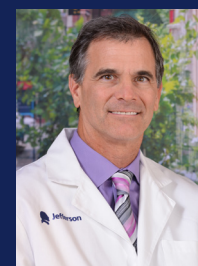
is too small to need surgical correction, the patient is followed by the Center's nurse practitioner, Jacqueline McGee, and physician assistant, Colin King. They monitor the size of a patient's aortic aneurysm, among other parameters, so the Center can intervene as soon as possible.

Although Collins required open surgery due to the size and complexity of her thoracic aortic aneurysm, the Center is performing more than 70% of surgeries using minimally invasive techniques. The Center also conducts research on minimally invasive techniques for complex aortic cases and shares findings at national meetings and in peer-reviewed journals.

The Jefferson Aortic Center is also part of the International Registry of Acute Aortic Dissections (IRAD), which collects data from 30 large referral centers in 11 countries to improve operative and post-operative care of people with these complex conditions.

For more information or to make an appointment, please visit [JeffersonHealth.org/AorticCenter](https://JeffersonHealth.org/AorticCenter).

*"Our (Vascular Surgery) collaboration with Cardiothoracic Surgery in the setting of the Aortic Center extends farther than the two services. We regularly work side-by-side with world-class Vascular Medicine specialists, Structural Interventional Cardiologists and heart failure specialists to provide innovative and individualized care to patients with aortic diseases. Our collaboration now extends across the Atlantic Ocean, as we are actively developing our relationship with the cardiovascular services at the world-famous Gemelli Hospital in Rome."*



**Paul J. DiMuzio, MD**

William M. Measey  
Professor of Surgery  
Director, Division of  
Vascular and Endovascular  
Surgery  
Co-Director, Jefferson  
Vascular Center

### In this issue

**Please Welcome**

Anthony Macchiavelli, MD – Page 2

**Changing Lives Through Research**

Pancreatic Researchers Advance Next-Generation  
Molecular Profiling – Page 2

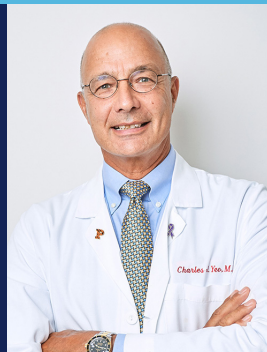
**Education**

Residency Program Receives Five-Year Accreditation,  
Reorganizes to Serve Growing Program – Page 3

**Those Who Give**

Naming Opportunities at New Jefferson Specialty  
Care Pavilion – Page 4

## Overview

**Charles J. Yeo, MD, FACS**

Samuel D. Gross Professor and Chairman  
Department of Surgery  
Senior Vice President and Chair, Enterprise Surgery  
Jefferson Health

## Finally – A Measure of Normalcy

After two very abnormal years of celebrations, our Department of Surgery Annual Banquet returned in fine style this past June 17. The venue was spectacular – The Franklin Institute. This black tie event was much anticipated, and did not disappoint. Finally – a measure of normalcy.

We gathered for cocktails, shared a meal and were treated to amazing presentations from our outgoing Chief Residents: Drs. Alvarez, Devin, O'Malley, Rios Diaz, Woodward, Zalewski, and Zheng. The statue of Ben Franklin, standing tall at the center of the room, served as a magnet for photos – and proved to be an imposing supervisor of our festivities. While many awards were distributed – research awards, ABSITE awards, teaching awards and others – the two most prestigious awards were presented to Dr. Alliric Willis – the winner of the Francis E. Rosato Faculty Teaching Award (as voted by the residents) and to Drs. Alicja Zalewski and Peter Altshuler – the co-winners of the Philip J. Wolfson Resident Teaching Award (as voted by the medical students).

This was a special night for many reasons. Two of our seven graduating Chief Residents were born out of the U.S. (Trinidad and Venezuela) and immigrated here for education. Two other chiefs were born in the U.S. to immigrant parents from Poland and China. The importance of immigration to the U.S. was on full display. Also on display were the principles of continuity and longevity. Our residency coordinator – Donna Guinto was recognized for her 38 years of service to Jefferson and our Department. She has counselled and advised hundreds of residents (and faculty). Thank you Donna for all you have done for Jefferson. We wish you well as you transition to this next phase of your life journey. Additionally, we welcomed our seven new categorical and five preliminary interns, new members of our Jefferson Surgery family.

Finally – a measure of normalcy!

## Please Welcome



**We are pleased to announce the recent appointment of Anthony Macchiavelli, MD, as Assistant Professor in the Division of Vascular Medicine.**

In 1983, Dr. Macchiavelli received his BS in Physics from the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY, and subsequently served as a United States Army Officer from May 1983 – July 1986. He then received his MD from the Lewis

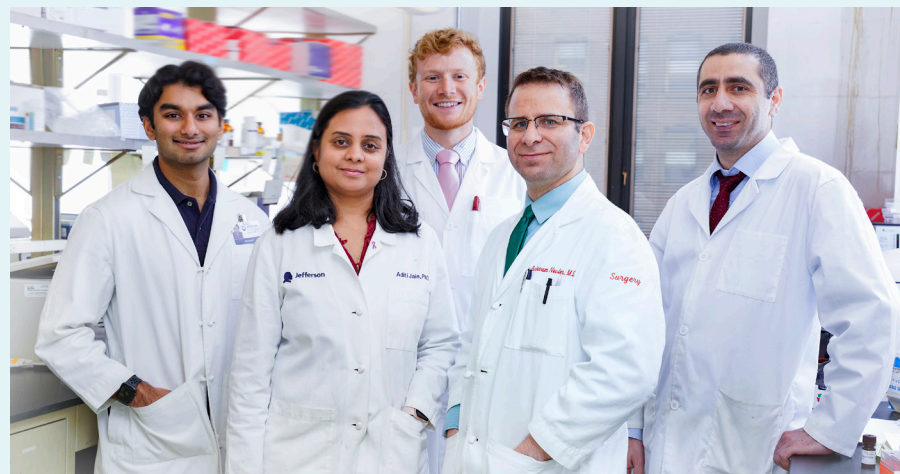
Katz School of Medicine at Temple University in 1996 and remained in Philadelphia to complete his residency in Medicine (1996-1998) at Graduate Hospital. From 1998 to present, Dr. Macchiavelli has worked in Internal and Hospital Medicine in private practice (1998-2006), Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals (2006-2010), and AtlantiCare health system (2011-2022).

He joined our faculty in early 2022 from AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center where he served as Chairman for both the Anticoagulation Subcommittee of Pharmacy and Therapeutics and the AtlantiCare Institutional Review Board, as well as holding the position of Medical Director for Post-Acute Services.

Dr. Macchiavelli sees patients at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Jefferson Methodist Hospital in South Philadelphia.

## Research

## Pancreatic Researchers Advance Next-Generation Molecular Profiling



Aditi Jain, PhD, and Avinoam Nevler, MD, (center) are spearheading Jefferson's Molecular Profiling of Pancreatic Cancer Program (JMP PaC) with the support of research technicians Sohum Patel and Ryan Maguire, and fellow Saed Khalilieh, MD.

The Jefferson Pancreas, Biliary and Related Cancer Center performs more pancreas surgeries than any other center in the tristate region. Each year, the center's team treats more than 200 patients who have cancerous, neoplastic or pre-cancerous lesions.

It's a level of care and volume of patients that presents a powerful opportunity: using molecular profiling to gather extensive data about pancreatic tumors. Molecular profiling can be a valuable tool in treating pancreatic cancer – now the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths with a five-year overall survival rate of just 11%.

"With molecular profiling, we're looking for patterns and signatures within the underlying genetic structure of an individual tumor," says Aditi Jain, PhD, Research Instructor in the Department of Surgery. Dr. Jain is the recipient of the 2021 Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN) Career Development Award, a two-year, \$200,000 grant for "Targeting BARD1 in Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma."

Together with Dr. Jain, Avinoam Nevler, MD, Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator at the Pancreatic Cancer Research Lab in the Department of Surgery, and research fellow, Saed Khalilieh, MD, are spearheading Jefferson's Molecular Profiling of Pancreatic Cancer, a program known as JMP PaC, or "jump pack."

Through JMP PaC, the team will conduct testing to identify biomarkers in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) tumors. In addition to helping inform possible tumor-specific treatments, these biomarkers potentially could predict both disease recurrence and signatures of drug response.

"At an individual level, molecular profiling can help to determine targeted treatments for patients. This has already been established in the 'Know Your Tumor' PanCAN initiative," Dr. Nevler explains. "At a global level, we can aggregate these data across centers to create large, comprehensive clinical and molecular datasets. Cancer researchers can use these large repositories both to generate and test new hypotheses for many years to come."

Insurance currently covers molecular profiling only for patients with advanced-stage pancreatic disease. A \$50,000 gift from a grateful patient is laying the groundwork to profile all patients. Now the Department of Surgery needs an additional \$150,000 to cover patient testing and specimen collection, processing and storage that insurance won't fund. The initial contributions, along with sustaining gifts, will support downstream research projects that leverage the information gathered.

*For more information, please contact Kelly M. Austin at [kelly.austin@jefferson.edu](mailto:kelly.austin@jefferson.edu) or 215-955-6383.*

## On the Job

This Spring, Paul Hazen and Brielle Maugeri joined the Department of Surgery as Education Programs Administrator and Residency Program Coordinator, respectively. In these roles, Hazen and Maugeri will support expansion of the Department of Surgery's Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs.



### Paul Hazen

Hazen joined Jefferson from Einstein Health, where he was a residency coordinator and then a fellowship coordinator. Prior to that, he served as program manager for Emergency Medicine at Drexel Hahnemann and held administrative roles at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

At Jefferson, Hazen is focusing on centralizing the Department of Surgery's educational programs and streamlining and standardizing the supporting processes. The longer-term

vision is to bring on more coordinators dedicated to GME programs, helping to ensure that all learners receive consistent and excellent service.

Hazen's own education focused on jazz performance (his specialty: the saxophone). These days, he doesn't play much sax but does enjoy participating in a musical improv team. While on stage, the team takes a suggestion from the audience. The pianist runs with the idea, and he joins his teammates in creating a musical in real time.



### Brielle Maugeri

As the team continues to take shape, Maugeri is getting to know current residents and taking over aspects of day-to-day communication and coordination. She came to Jefferson after serving as special events coordinator on the team that opened the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City, NJ, in 2018.

Although this is her first experience in higher education, the field is "all in the family." Maugeri's mother has a similar position at

another university – providing a detailed understanding of the role and the skills and strengths that lead to success.

While earning a bachelor's degree in communications studies, Maugeri landed a sought-after internship through the Disney College Program. She supported the parade and fireworks at the Magic Kingdom theme park – and still visits Orlando any chance she gets.

## Education

# Residency Program Receives Five-Year Accreditation, Reorganizes to Serve Growing Program



During her 28-year tenure with the Residency Program, Donna Guinto supported over 200 residents including associate program directors Adam Bodzin, MD (left), and Joshua Marks, MD (right) – both Class of 2013 – and program director Karen Chojnacki, MD (sidebar).

The General Surgery Residency Program within the Department of Surgery received full accreditation for five years from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in January 2022. In March, the Residency Program completed a successful match—selecting seven categorical residents from about 1,600 applications. And in June, it said goodbye to longtime Residency Program Administrator Donna Guinto, who retired after 38 years with Jefferson.

Since Guinto became coordinator in 1994, the Department of Surgery's Residency Program has grown in length (from five to six years), number

of residents (from six to seven) and complexity (with more guidelines from ACGME and other bodies). The Department also offers Fellowships in Colorectal Surgery, Surgical Critical Care, Transplant Surgery and Vascular Surgery, with plans to add more in the future. Fellowships in pediatric surgery and vascular medicine are also offered but are managed by Nemours Children's Hospital and the Division of Vascular Medicine respectively.

Considering Guinto's retirement and other staff changes, Associate Dean of GME, Surgical Division, Karen Chojnacki, MD, recognized an opportunity to reorganize based on

### Gratitude for Guinto

"I remember just graduating medical school and walking into Donna's office," Dr. Chojnacki says. "It's unbelievable to think about Donna not being there." For Guinto, supporting learners like Dr. Chojnacki has been the most rewarding part of her job. "I have loved watching medical students apply and then become proficient in their specialty. The other day I pulled Dr. Chojnacki's interview application from 1995. Since then, I've watched her grow into this amazing person and now the residency program director and a leader at Jefferson."



**Karen A. Chojnacki, MD**

Program Director  
Class of 2000

the program's expansion. By bringing residency education together with both undergraduate (medical students) and fellowship education, the Department could offer better experiences to learners.

The Department hired Paul Hazen as program administrator across all three education levels and Brielle Maugeri as residency program coordinator. Currently, various departmental secretaries serve as fellowship coordinators. The longer-term plans call for those roles to move under Hazen for a team of six people supporting GME administration.

"With our new team in place, we hope to administer these residencies and

fellowships with greater attention to detail," Dr. Chojnacki says. "We also want stay ahead of the game with ACGME and start proactively innovating how we design and run the programs."

Dr. Chojnacki says that innovative approaches will be essential with major changes on the horizon. One of the most urgent: the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) moving to pass/fail grading.

"Many schools are also moving to pass/fail grading, which makes it much harder to differentiate candidates," she says.

"We will have to become more innovative in who – and how – we recruit."

# Naming Opportunities at New Jefferson Specialty Care Pavilion



As the third-tallest building east of Broad Street, the Specialty Care Pavilion at 1101 Chestnut Street will transform the Center City skyline.

The Specialty Care Pavilion represents the most significant new patient care facility at Jefferson since the 1970s. With a total cost of more than \$762 million, it will serve as a model for modern medical facilities and a cornerstone of Jefferson’s Center City, Philadelphia campus.

On schedule to open to patients in spring 2024, the 19-story building will consolidate more than ten different specialties – including surgery – in 460,000 square feet at 1101 Chestnut Street. It will feature emerging technologies to support an intelligent, responsive approach to care, as well as a seamless in-person and virtual experience for patients. Every detail – including sunlit healing spaces, more convenient parking and amenities like a café, pharmacy and neurodiverse seating areas – will prioritize the comfort of patients and their families.

The Department of Surgery will have dedicated outpatient spaces on two levels of the Specialty Care Pavilion. Level 5 will house Ambulatory Surgery, while Level 8 will house General Surgery (along with the Digestive Health Institute). Surgeons will also practice on other floors housing multidisciplinary centers. The Department of Surgery is inviting grateful patients, supportive faculty and staff, and other generous benefactors to contribute and name public spaces in recognition of their philanthropic gifts.

“There are team rooms, education rooms, exam rooms and even operating rooms available for naming,” says Kelly Austin, Assistant Vice President of Development in the Office of Institutional Advancement. “It’s a meaningful way to preserve a family legacy,

pay tribute to the strength and resolve of a friend or loved one or honor a physician or other member of your care team.”

Already, grateful patients have pledged their support of the Specialty Care Pavilion, including Pat Healy, in honor of Karen A. Chojnacki, MD; Bob Ayd, in honor of Gerald A. Isenberg, MD; and Greg and Beth Webster, in memory of Greg’s father. Jefferson faculty also are demonstrating their support of the facility through personal contributions. These include Drs. Warren R. and Meighan Maley, and Drs. Charles and Theresa Yeo. In addition, contributions from colleagues and friends in memory of Dr. Gary Rosato will dedicate a Team Room in the Ambulatory Surgery Center.

To learn more or make a gift online, please visit: [specialtycare.jeffersonhealth.org](https://specialtycare.jeffersonhealth.org)

To inquire about naming opportunities, contact Kelly Austin at **215-955-6383** or [kelly.austin@jefferson.edu](mailto:kelly.austin@jefferson.edu).



## Surgical Solutions

Jefferson Department of Surgery  
620 Curtis Building  
1015 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
[JeffersonHealth.org/Surgery](https://JeffersonHealth.org/Surgery)

**Jefferson Surgical Solutions**  
is published by  
Thomas Jefferson University and  
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.  
Jennifer Brumbaugh, MA, Editor-in-Chief  
Susan Murphy, Writer

Information in Surgical Solutions  
is not intended to provide advice  
on personal medical matters  
or to substitute for consultation  
with a physician.

**Editorial Board**  
Kelly Austin  
Andrea DeMastro  
Adam Frank, MD  
Gerald Isenberg, MD  
Florence Williams  
Charles J. Yeo, MD

CS 22-2047

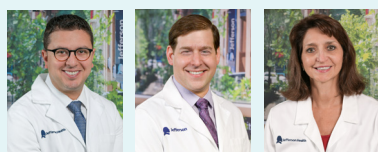
620 Curtis Building  
1015 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Non Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Phila., PA  
Permit #276

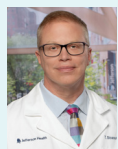
### News in Brief



**Francesco Palazzo, MD**, has been promoted to Professor of Surgery.



**Drs. Adam Bodzin, George Koenig, and Dawn Salvatore**, have been promoted to Associate Professor of Surgery.



**T. Sloane Guy, MD, MBA**, was recently appointed Vice Chief of the Division of Cardiac Surgery and Clinical Director, Cardiac Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.



Chair of Surgery at Jefferson Health – Abington, **Orlando Kirton, MD**, was named a 2022 History Maker by the Philadelphia Tribune.



General Surgery resident, **Sunjay Kumar, MD**, was named the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) Guidelines Fellow for 2022 – 2024.



**Olubenga Okusanya, MD**, was included in the National Minority Quality Forum’s “40 Under 40 Leaders in Minority Health” for 2022. He also received the Levi Watkins Innovation and Leadership Scholarship from Thoracic Surgery Foundation.



**Kathleen Thistle, MSN, RN, CRNP, ACNP-BC** received the Center City 2021 DAISY Award for consistently demonstrating excellence through clinical expertise and extraordinary compassionate care.

For more news about the Department follow us on social media. [JeffersonSurgery](https://www.facebook.com/JeffersonSurgery) [@JeffSurgery](https://twitter.com/JeffSurgery)