

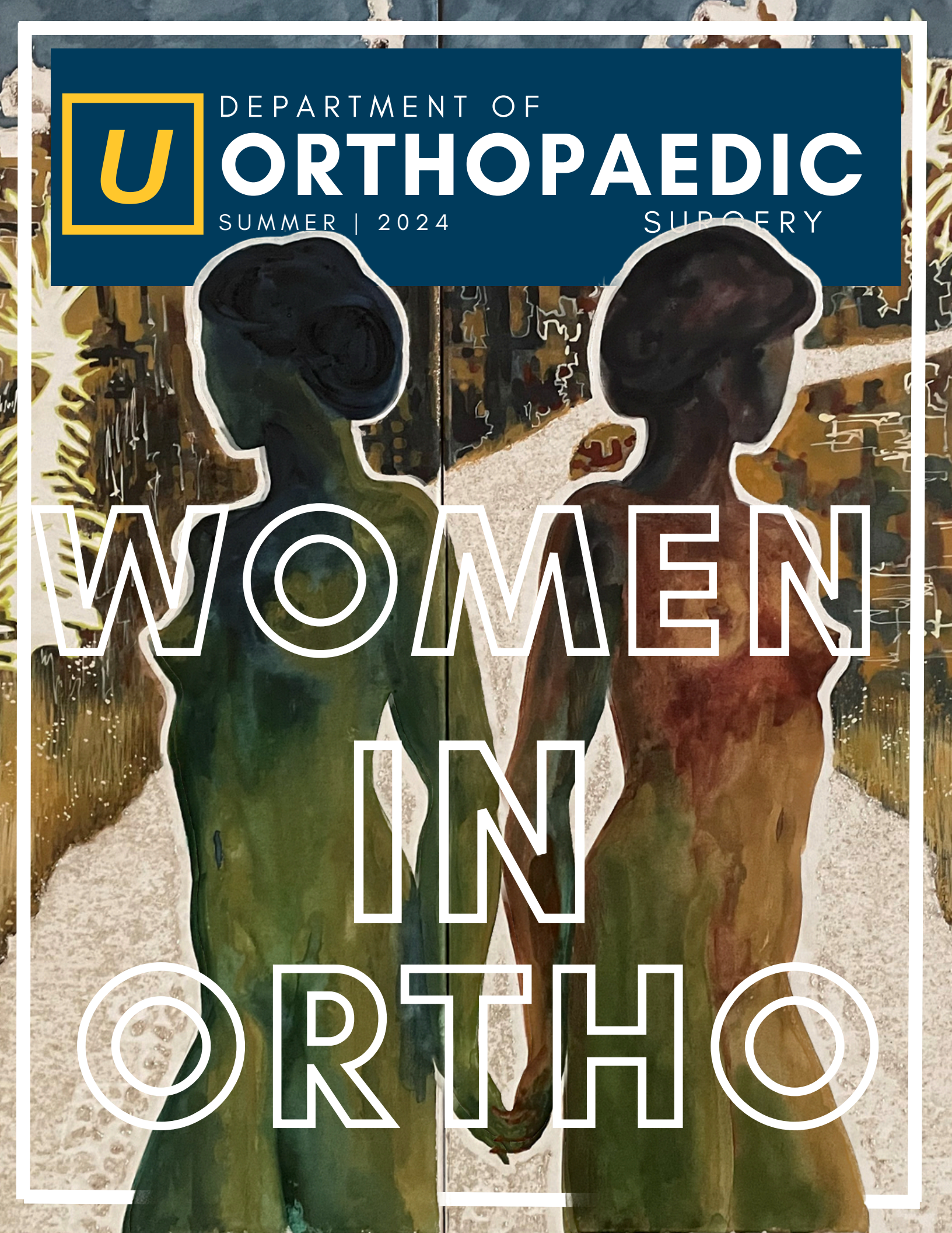


DEPARTMENT OF

**ORTHOPAEDIC**

SUMMER | 2024

SURGERY



**WOMEN  
IN  
ORTHO**

# UCLA ORTHO SURGERY NEWSLETTER

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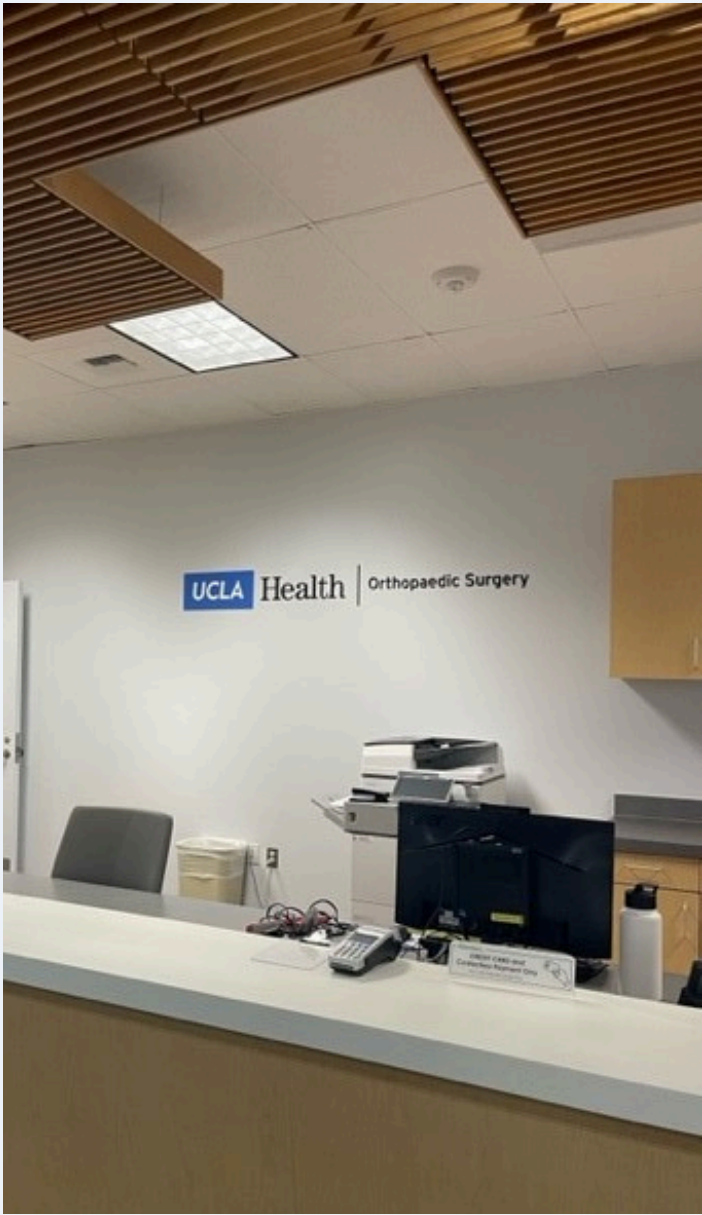
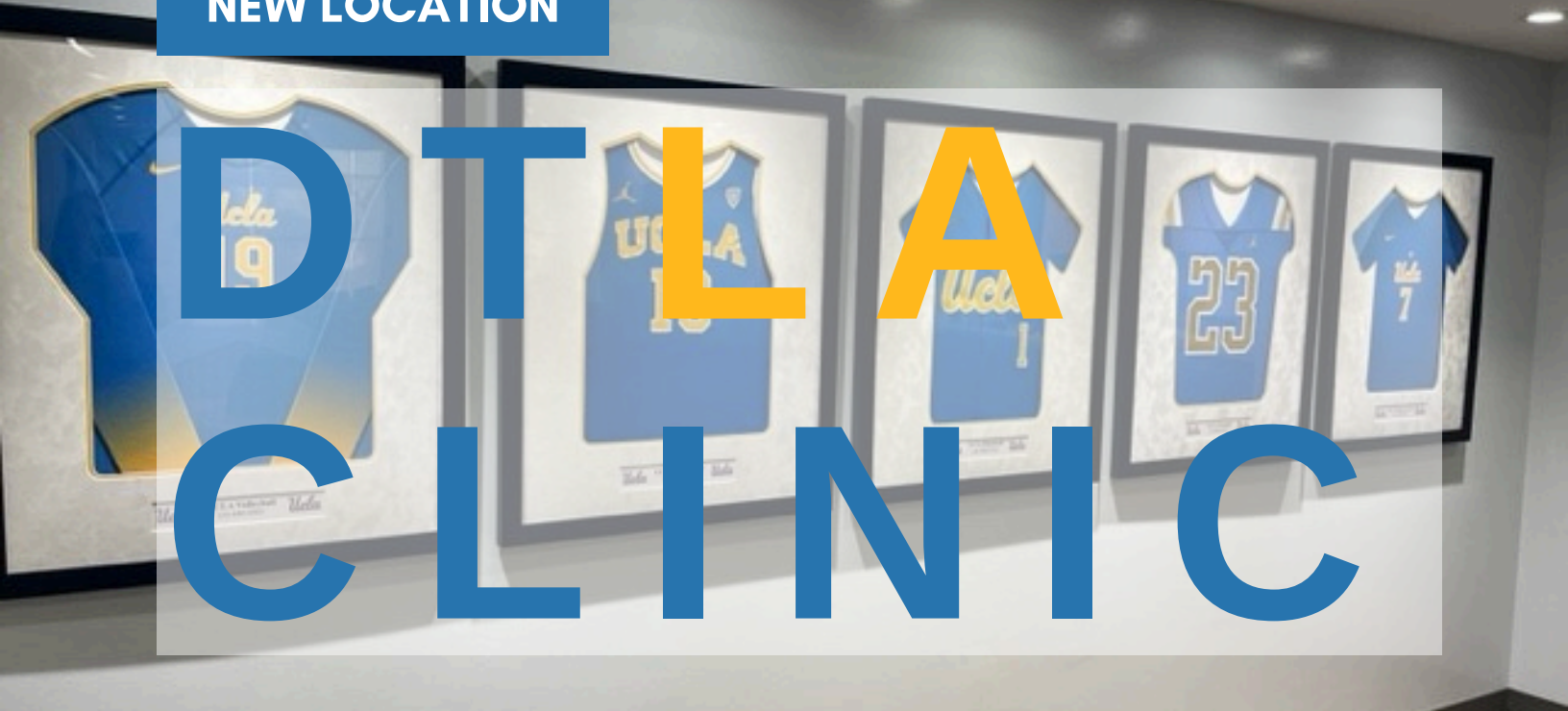
Meet some of our women in the UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery!

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### Alumni Spotlight

Meet Dr. Anna Vergun! She is both super-doctor and super-mom. Find out how she does it all.

NEW LOCATION



We are pleased to offer services at our newest Downtown location, opened in February 2023. The services include orthopaedic oncology, hand surgery, spine surgery, sports medicine, physical medicine & rehabilitation, and pediatric orthopaedics. Downtown Orthopaedic Surgery offers thirteen exam rooms located in the clinic as well as two operating rooms and six pre- and post-procedure bays located in the ambulatory surgery center. Expansion of UCLA Orthopaedic Surgery to Downtown Los Angeles is part of the mission to provide world-class healthcare to underserved areas and improve access. We look forward to being the leading provider in Orthopaedic Surgery across Los Angeles, offering consistency and excellence in the delivery of patient care.



## CHAIR'S CORNER

# NICHOLAS BERNTHAL, MD

Summer is a natural transition time in academic medicine. As we watch one class of residents graduate and head off to fellowship, we welcome a new class of interns into our family. Summer is also a natural time to take stock of who and where we are. We at the UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery have always taken great pride in our history – we celebrate Dr. Marshall Urist and the discovery of BMP, Dr. Harlan Amstutz and the introduction of resurfacing arthroplasty, Dr. Jeff Eckardt and the advent of limb salvage surgery, among so many other discoveries made in our hallowed halls. But this taking reflection comes with a responsibility.

We ask ourselves every day are we pushing hard enough? Are we innovating the next great discovery? Are we changing the way orthopaedics will be practiced in future?





Well, I am thrilled to be part of a team that can answer all of these essential questions in the affirmative. In the past several months, Drs. Karen Lyons, Tad Kremen, and Sharon Hame have been awarded one of the largest musculoskeletal grants in the history of the United States as an ARPA-H team elected to discover a new biologic to prevent arthritis. Drs. Aurelia Nattiv and Kris Jones have been awarded a Department of Defense grant to study new non-surgical methods to treat stress fractures. Drs. Alexandra Stavrakis, Ed McPherson, and I were privileged enough to conclude a Phase I trial and open a Phase II trial for a new therapeutic to treat infected implants and their recalcitrant biofilms. Dr. Alice Soragni leads an NIH funded team discovering a new platform to rapidly discover personalized solutions for our cancer patients; Dr. Kristen

Reider leads a funded group that will help our cerebral palsy patients by understanding the neuromuscular interface; and Dr. Lauren Wessel received a career development award to continue her ascension as a surgeon-scientist. We reflect on these incredible pursuits, each promising to live up to our predecessors' uncompromising standard and achieve the transformative change to which we so ardently dedicate ourselves. And inspirationally, ALL of them are led by WOMEN in ORTHOPAEDICS, the topic of this newsletter. The women of UCLA Orthopaedics continue to drive the field forward and provide a irrefutable case that gender diversity in our field makes us smarter, more dynamic, and more able to achieve our goal: transforming our field of medicine.



ORTHO IN THE NEWS

# BRU [W] INS

UCLA Otho, making waves

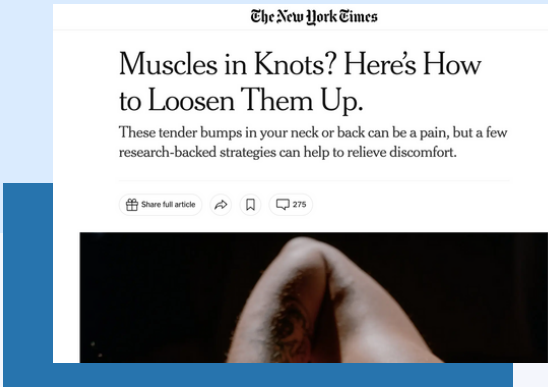
in the news and media.



## JOSHUA GOLDMAN, MD

Dr. Goldman shared his expert commentary in The New York Times article: *Muscles in Knots? Here's How to Loosen Them Up.*

Find the article on [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)



## ADAM SASSOON, MD

Dr. Sassoon was featured on a special podcast episode of AAHKS Amplified, where he shared how he responds to this question often asked by his patients "Do I Need A Hip or Knee Replacement?"

Find the article on [www.aahks.org](http://www.aahks.org)



## ANDREW JENSEN, MD

Dr. Andy Jensen is featured on UCLA Health helping former Boston Marathon winner, Jacqueline Hansen, get back on track after shoulder replacement surgery.

Read more of this feature on [www.uclahealth.org](http://www.uclahealth.org)



## BRENDAN SHI, MD

Our resident, Dr. Brendan Shi, received the 2023 Richard Kyle, MD, OREF National Resident Champion Award coming in at first place. Judges honored Dr. Shi at the OREF National Resident Research Symposium for his presentation titled *"Bisphosphonate Chaperones Effectively Target the Entesis without Impairing Soft Tissue-to-Bone Repair Integrity."*



## KRISTOFER JONES, MD

Why ACL injuries are more common in female athletes than male counterparts? Dr. Kristofer Jones provides his insight into this issue on PBS News Hour.

Read more of this feature on [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org).



## THOMAS, OLSON MD

One of our resident physicians, Dr. Thomas Olson, has been honored with the 2024 "Excellence in Teaching with Humanism" award, a testament to his exceptional dedication to teaching and unwavering commitment to providing compassionate, patient-centered care.



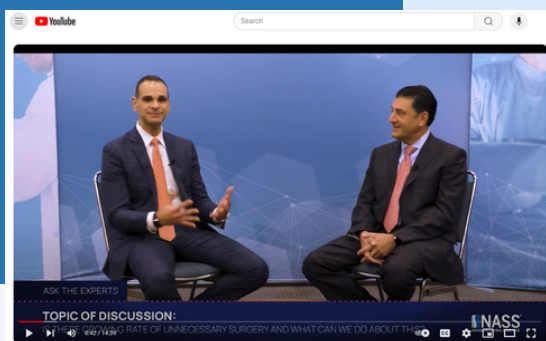


## NICK SHAMIE, MD

*Is There a Growing Rate of Unnecessary Spine Surgery?* UCLA Ortho's Dr. Arya N. Shamie speaks on the topic with (NASS) North American Spine Society.



More of this feature on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



## NICK BERNTHAL, MD

Our very own department Chair, Dr. Nicholas Bernthal, has teamed up with Duke University's Tatiana Segura, PhD and a team of UCLA engineers to develop a preventative solution for postoperative orthopedic surgical infections.

More of this feature on [www.beckersspine.com](http://www.beckersspine.com)



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT

## AMSTUTZ FAMILY



The warmth and light of Dr. Harlan Amstutz lives on through Patti Amstutz and their family. We reached out to Patti for an interview, as we featured her family for our Donor Spotlight. The way Patti speaks about her late husband, now three years since his passing, is as if he was in the room, sitting right next to her.

Dr. Harlan Amstutz attended UCLA as an undergraduate student-athlete on the varsity basketball team, playing for John Wooden. Legend has it that it was Coach Wooden who encouraged Dr. Amstutz to pursue a career in medicine- mainly because he would not make it as a

professional basketball player. He continued his education in Westwood as a medical student. While in medical school, he also enjoyed photography. He ran a small business out of his garage taking photos of classmates and colleagues. In 1956, upon graduating medical school, he proposed to Patti with an engagement ring he bought after selling one of his camera lenses, and the promise for adventure, if she agreed to move with him to the other side of the country while he attended a residency in New York. They married a year later.

He went on to complete an orthopaedic residency at the Hospital

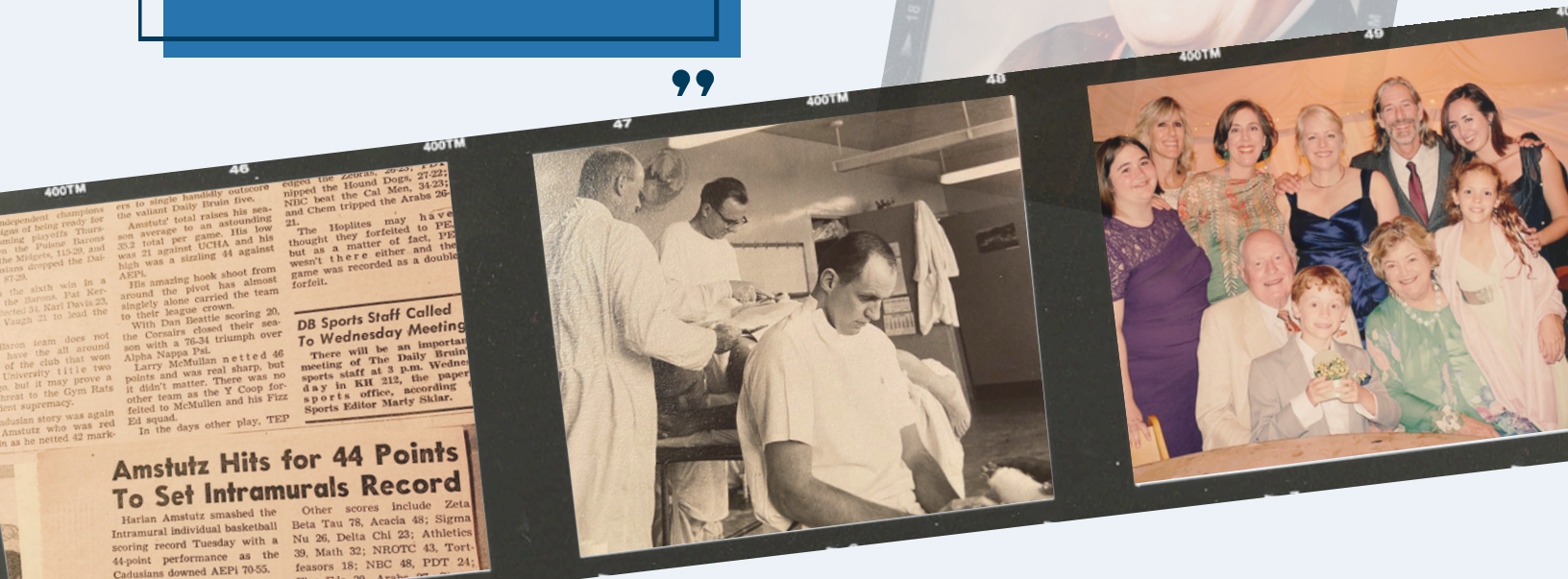
for Special Surgery in New York and went on to an NIH-funded fellowship at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in London. Dr. Amstutz proudly served in the United States Air Force from 1961 to 1963. Dr. Amstutz served on the faculty of HSS from 1965-1970, before returning to UCLA lead the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in 1970.

Over the next 40 years, Dr. Amstutz had a career that was unparalleled in influence and accomplishment. He is widely credited as the father of surface replacement hip arthroplasty, he started the UCLA Clinical Evaluation Unit (CEU) to look at outcomes of surgical procedures, and he founded the bioengineering laboratories and the PhD program in Biomedical Engineering at UCLA. Believed in research and science to improve medicine, not profit.

When asked why Patti chose to contribute on behalf of the Amstutz Foundation to UCLA Orthopaedic Surgery, she said, *“UCLA signifies “education” at various levels, and if our democracy is to survive today’s “climate”-in all its meanings, that pursuit ...the ability of the populous to consider and think...is the goal, indeed, the hope. Hence our continuous support over the years toward multiple venues at the University. Orthopaedics in particular was my husband’s life. He had a true passion for continuous research and performance to achieve better results and “widgets.”*”

In 2022, the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery established its Annual Harlan Amstutz, M.D. Memorial Lectureship that honors the legacy of Dr. Amstutz and facilitates knowledge sharing in joint replacement.

*that pursuit ...the ability of the populous to consider and think... is the goal, indeed, the hope*



# GRANT SPOTLIGHT

Jennifer Zieba, PhD

**Grant: Stephen I. Katz Early Stage Investigator Research Project R01 Grant**

**In collaboration with Deborah Krakow, Brigitte Gomperts, John Belperio**

**Research Title: Investigating pulmonary complications due to abnormal collagen/ER stress in Osteogenesis Imperfecta**

Osteogenesis imperfecta (OI) is a genetic bone disorder; also known as brittle bone disease. Signs and symptoms may range from mild to severe. The condition can be mild, with only a few fractures during a person's lifetime. In more severe cases, the condition can cause numerous fractures that occur without any apparent cause.

In cases when patients with OI experience lung infection or damage, especially older patients, tend to fare

worse than those without the disorder. Currently, there is no explanation, why this occurs. Dr. Jennifer Zieba and her colleagues are seeking answers. Their study aims to investigate the specifics of what happens when an OI lung is damaged. The goal of the study is to inform clinicians as quickly as possible so they can begin trying existing interventions that may be more effective in those with OI.

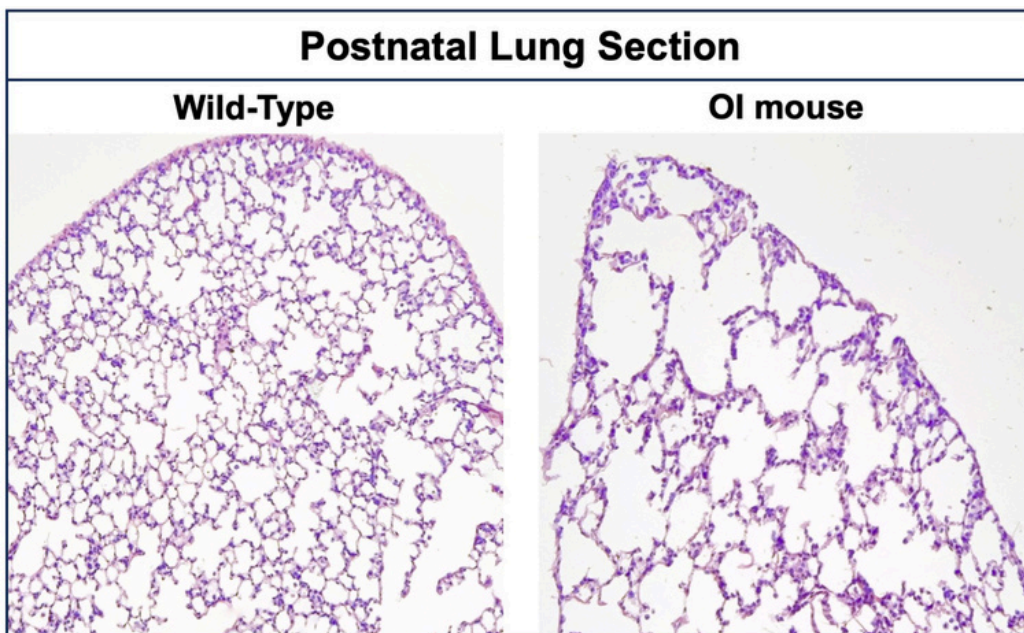
The increased bone fragility in OI patients that leads to fractures, primarily results from defects in the structure and/or the amount of secreted type I collagen. While bone fragility is the primary cause of morbidity in OI, pulmonary compromise is the leading cause of mortality. Using two OI mouse models representing major forms of OI (missense/loss of function mutations in type I collagen), this study will address the hypotheses that mutant type I collagen secretion

and ER stress produces abnormal pulmonary morphology, affects lung cell differentiation, impairs lung damage recovery, and that altered ECM and ER stress negatively impact signaling pathways.

The investigation of how type I collagen expressing cells contribute to pulmonary function addresses a long-standing enigmatic question of why OI patients have pulmonary complications across the severity spectrum, a clinically well-appreciated but scientifically unexplored topic. While understanding and developing treatments geared to improving bone integrity and decreasing fracture incidence are critically important, it is not the main cause of mortality in OI. This study will identify novel targets for future clinical therapies that could ameliorate OI lung abnormalities, for which there are presently no

established treatments. The mouse models also represent a unique opportunity to contribute to the understanding of how endogenous ER stress and abnormal extracellular matrix secretion affect lung development and function that will translate to a host of other genetic and pathological disorders in which these mechanisms broadly contribute to pulmonary pathogenesis.

Support for the OI research project was made possible by the R01 grant. The grant was created for early-stage investigators who are changing their field of study. The study proposed for this grant represents a significant departure from Dr. Zieba's previous work in bone and cartilage and is her first entry into the field of lung development and postnatal lung homeostasis research.



# RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT



## RISHI TRIKHA, MD

**Rishi Trikha, MD**, is a PG-Y 5 resident with the UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and was selected for this feature because of his dedication to research and community service.

## YOU

The answer to this question always starts with my family. My mother is of Indian heritage and grew up in a small town in Kenya. She moved to the United States for university and raised me and my brother. My older brother toughened me up through standard brotherly fighting and sports. To this day, I love to stay active by playing soccer, basketball, football or getting shown up in the water by my wife while surfing. I have my own food blog (shameless plug) and love to cook.

## GOALS

I am a firm believer that the goal of any job in any field should be to leave the world in a better place. There are many ways in which we as orthopaedic surgeons can enhance our field and improve patient care (after all, that is the bottom line). For me personally, my career goals will always be geared toward enhancing our field through meaningful research, mentorship and the promotion of a diverse surgeon workforce. These are not mutually exclusive and there is a lot of work to do in each. At the end of my career, I want to look back and say that I gave the best version of myself in order to make the most impact I could.

# WHY

As a mathematics major in college, I knew I needed a career with objectivity. Orthopaedic surgery is a field with relatively objective results where you get to work with your hands all while having the opportunity to have a tremendously positive impact on people’s lives...what could be better?

# FUTURE

It’s a tremendously exciting time to be an orthopaedic trainee. We are in the golden era of regenerative medicine and chondroprotection. Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence is affecting everyone in medicine. For orthopaedic surgery, I think this is currently taking the form of machine learning algorithms to create/enhance predictive models. We need to do right by our patients by providing them with the most accurate information about their prognosis. We also HAVE to learn from other medical and surgical specialties. There are so many fantastic advancements happening throughout medicine, and we need to collaborate in order to further our own field.

# DEDICATE

I have to shout out to my co-residents. We have some of the brightest minds at UCLA who undoubtedly could have been successful in any career. The dedication to patient care despite academic pressures and despite the standard day-to-day stressors is truly astounding. My co-residents are incredibly well-rounded people in addition to being caring doctors and it’s an honor to get to work with them each day.



# PATIENT SPOTLIGHT

## CASEY'S STORY

On bluebird bird days in Vail, Colorado, young Casey Cuny dons skis, shreds gnar, slicing sharp trails into monstrous mountains making them bow beneath him in a snowy wake. Battling goliath peaks aren't the only bouts Casey faced and conquered. On one dark winter day in, December 1989, eminence towered over 13-year-old Casey when he was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma. There wasn't a mountain Casey couldn't conquer, but it wasn't just mountains he would have to climb. There were valleys and peaks and uncharted terrain that would change his life forever.

In 1990, Casey met Dr. Ross Wilkins and underwent a life-saving limb salvage surgery. While he is grateful for the medical expertise of Dr. Wilkins, and life-saving medical technology, Casey owes much of his healing journey to his teachers, *"as a teenager fighting cancer, my teachers were pivotal in helping me not only overcome*

“  
**THEY HELPED SHOW ME  
WHAT I WAS CAPABLE OF**



*that horrific year, but in the aftermath, they helped show me what I was capable of.” He followed the path of these great educators who guided him through his journey’s uncharted terrain: “I wanted to give back with my second chance at life, and so I followed in their footsteps and joined the teaching profession.”*

Casey went away for college and attended the University of Arizona. After graduation, he moved to Los Angeles to pursue a teaching career. Today, Casey has served as a teacher for over 21 years and was selected as the 2024 LA County Teacher of the Year and 2024 California Teacher of the Year. Casey and his wife, Dawn Cuny, have two sons: Dylan, age 21, a senior at Seton Hall University, and Landon, age 17, a senior at Valencia High School.

Shadows of conquered peaks’ past loomed when Casey’s old implant could no longer provide him with the mobility he needed. He hasn’t been able to ride a bike since he was 13, and his old implant could only allow him to bend as his knee at 90 degrees. But Casey was determined to find



**HIS DEVOTION TO SAVE  
MY LEG HAS CHANGED  
MY LIFE**

a solution. In his search he found Dr. Nicholas Bernthal, a referral from Dr. Jeffery Eckardt- a retired surgeon originally referred by Dr. Wilkins.

Casey's recent and second surgery was very complex and the possibility of amputation was high. Casey's knee implant required repair but there was no way of knowing if the new technology would fit the old implant as no digital record of the initial surgery existed. Dr. Bernthal's ceaseless investigation led to the discovery of a physical copy of Casey's surgical report in the archives of the company, where his implant was manufactured. This discovery led to the decision to postpone Casey's second surgery as it was now possible to bridge the old implant with the newer models. This





decision, together with Dr. Bernthal's devotion to saving Casey's leg, proved to be life-changing.

The recovery was painful and difficult, but Casey says that the most difficult part was, perhaps, his two-month absence from the classroom. Being away from his students, his life's passion- Casey was determined to get back on his feet. After an intensive rehabilitation process, he was back in the classroom in two months and walking in three. Casey says that his second surgery has improved his confidence through the dramatic improvement in his mobility.

Casey adds that his health is better now as he can ride a bike for cardio training as well as pursue his passion for golf. Casey adds that he is beyond grateful to Dr. Bernthal and other doctors at UCLA for giving him a new lease on life at 47!

“

***THE MOST DIFFICULT PART, WAS, PERHAPS, THE TWO-MONTH ABSENCE FROM THE CLASSROOM***

”



# TRAINING PROGRAM: ORTHO HIGH SCHOOL

**Ortho is bringing education to high school students!**

In May of last year, one of the Orthopaedic residents, Rishi Trikha, organized a workshop to introduce high school students from underrepresented communities to the field of Orthopaedic Surgery. The workshop consisted of a lecture component lead by the residents and a hands-on interactive demonstration that included bone

models, plates, screws, and external fixation devices. Students were given an opportunity to interact with residents and faculty directly during the Q&A session. The workshop proved to be an exciting and engaging experience for everyone involved. We plan for this workshop to be the first of many future community outreach events in local high schools and beyond.





**Ambar Garcia**, is one of the two EDI scholarship recipients, who joined the department for a rotation in Orthopaedics. At the time of her rotation, Dr. Garcia was studying at Columbia University, class of 2024. Dr. Garcia grew up in Springfield, MA, a daughter of immigrant mother from the Dominican Republic, she initially studied engineering and overcame significant adversity to pursue her dream career in medicine. Dr. Garcia wants to see more diversity in Orthopaedic Surgery through proactive recruitment of applicants identifying as Black, Latinx, and applicants from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Additional steps to increase diversity can include early introduction of Orthopaedic Surgery to medical students and employing a diverse group of attendings, who interact and evaluate medical students to reduce bias and ensure a broad range of perspectives.

## AMBAR GARCIA



# SCHOLARSHIP EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

**Zachary Randall**, is another EDI scholarship recipient, who was selected by the committee to join the department for a rotation in Orthopaedics. Dr. Randall cites trauma work as one of the most rewarding experiences in his journey in Orthopaedics due to close collaborations between the team members and deep dedication of everyone involved. He adds that the trauma service was the first step for patients, especially those recovering from vehicular or ballistic trauma, to healing from the darkest days of their lives. Dr. Randall, who overcame self-doubt and other obstacles in pursuing his education, is dedicated to bringing more fellow Native American students to the field by partnering with Native American communities and organizations to create awareness about the field of Orthopaedic Surgery as a career choice.



## ZACHARY RANDALL

WOMEN



IN  
ORTHO



*This Issue celebrates women in the UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. The women featured are some of many who contribute innovation, compassion, and leading-edge science in delivering healthcare to our patients. We've brought you stories of overcoming challenges, determination and success, underscored by the journey of self-discovery and the passion for helping others. These women push innovation in health sciences to the next level, fearlessly advocate care for their patients, and unapologetically show up and shine out.*



*"I feel so grateful to have discovered orthopaedic surgery in medical school. You have the potential to make a huge impact in patients' quality of life. I never felt any adversity during my training in both residency here at UCLA and fellowship. The biggest challenge in practice has been trying to balance work with raising young children. I hope that as the orthopaedic workforce becomes more diverse, trainees in the future will be able to find mentors who they can relate to and feel more comfortable seeking advice from."*

**Dr. Alexandra Stavrakis** is a board-certified Orthopaedic Surgeon with specialized training in hip and knee joint replacement and complex revision joint replacement.

“  
I feel so grateful to have discovered orthopaedic surgery  
”



**ALEXANDRA**  
**STAVRAKIS, MD**





A native of Portland, Oregon, Dr. Stavrakis attended the University of Southern California as an undergraduate and UCLA for medical school. She completed her residency training in Orthopaedic Surgery at UCLA and her fellowship training in Adult Reconstruction/Joint Replacement at the prestigious Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) at Cornell University in New York. She has also completed further fellowship training, including an orthopaedic surgery research fellowship and Biodesign fellowship, both at UCLA.

Her primary research interests include both clinical and basic science research on periprosthetic joint infection prevention and management. She has authored numerous peer-reviewed research articles and book chapters and regularly presents at national meetings. Dr. Stavrakis is a member of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

Dr. Stavrakis is an Assistant Professor-in-Residence of Orthopaedic Surgery at UCLA, and Chief of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Los Angeles VA. She also serves as the UCLA Orthopaedic Surgery Associate Residency Program Director. Dr. Stavrakis sees patients in clinic and performs surgery at the UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center and Orthopaedic Hospital.



*You have the potential  
to make a huge  
impact*



**Dr. Sharon Hame** is a board certified orthopaedic surgeon with subspecialty certification in sports medicine. She has been practicing orthopaedic sports medicine for over 23 years. She is currently a Professor of Clinical Orthopaedic Surgery and sees patients at the UCLA Medical Center and at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center. Dr. Hame completed her residency at the New York University Medical Center and her sports medicine fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles. She serves as the Head Team Physician for LA Sparks, Associate Team physician for the UCLA Athletic Department, team physician for UCLA Football, UCLA Women's Basketball, UCLA Women's Indoor and Beach Volleyball and UCLA Men's Tennis.

#### **Why Orthopaedic Surgery?**

*After an ACL injury at the age of 17, I was introduced to sports medicine and orthopaedic surgery. I was fascinated by the anatomy of the knee and spent hours studying the structures that kept it stable. My goal then was to work in the field of sports medicine and the best possible way to do this and to direct patient care was to become an orthopaedic surgeon.*

#### **What do you hope to see for Women in Ortho in the future?**

*I do hope that Women in Ortho in the future will have more opportunities for*

*leadership, speaking, publishing, and team coverage. I also hope that Women in Ortho are respected and rewarded for what they do every day*



**SHARON**  
**HAME, MD**

*in the clinics, operating room and on the field. I hope that even in a small way I have been able to help eliminate the barriers and pave the way for more women to become successful orthopaedic surgeons.*

**What was your experience like as a woman in Ortho?**

*My experience as a woman in orthopaedic surgery has been both extraordinary and challenging. I take great pride in being part of a select group of women who have the honor of treating and caring for patients with musculoskeletal injuries. Over my 25-year career, however, I have had to overcome both conscious and unconscious bias in order to break barriers and attain all the success that I have had in the field. More recently, I have seen more women enter the field, and this gives me great hope for the future of our specialty.*



“

*I take great pride in being part of a select group of women who have the honor of treating and caring for patients*

”

**Dr. Amanda Honsvall-Hoefler** is a Primary Care Sports Medicine physician within the UCLA Departments of Family Medicine and Orthopedic Surgery, Division of Sports Medicine. Dr. Honsvall joined the UCLA Division of Sports Medicine after first working as a physician at the University of Minnesota where she cared for patients of all ages with orthopaedic injuries.

Dr. Honsvall received her medical degree from the University of Minnesota and completed her residency in Family Medicine at the University of Minnesota Methodist Hospital. As a resident, she was honored as an American Medicine Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) Resident Scholar for her dedication and contribution to Sports Medicine. She received her Sports Medicine fellowship specialty training at UCLA, where she served as team physician for Santa Monica High School and assistant team physician for the UCLA Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, the Los Angeles Lakers and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

### **Why Orthopaedic Surgery?**

*I chose a career in primary care sports medicine and non-operative orthopedics to best help others overcome musculoskeletal injuries and conditions to pursue active and healthy lives, coupled with my passion for community involvement, leadership and academics. As a sports medicine physician, I strive to practice patient-centered, individualized*

*care to address my patients' needs while helping them identify and work towards their personal health and exercise goals. I have also developed a strong interest and expertise in musculoskeletal ultrasound and the use of orthobiologics in non-operative treatment of orthopedic injuries. Additionally, this career supports my love of community involvement and academic medicine. I enjoy working with athletes and have provided medical coverage at a wide variety of mass participation events and tournaments, including longitudinal care of athletes at all levels. Academically, I enjoy teaching and mentoring trainees both in clinic and on the sideline. My current research interests include musculoskeletal ultrasound for evaluation of pediatric injuries and the intersection between sports medicine and health disparities.*



**AMANDA**  
**HONSVALL, MD**

### What were the challenges you faced being a woman in Ortho?

*As a female in the largely male-dominated field of orthopedics, I have worked hard to establish myself as an expert and leader in the field through rigorous training, dedication to excellent innovative and evidence-based clinical care, sports/team coverage and research. I have been fortunate to train and work at universities with strong female leadership that strive towards equity with regard to professional opportunities. Having strong female mentors has been very helpful in my career development and learning how to overcome adversity. In turn, I enjoy mentoring and empowering female fellows, residents and medical students in their pursuit of careers in sports medicine. I have found the best route to overcoming adversity is through direct communication of goals, issues and potential resolutions with leadership, and participation in work groups to best address diversity, equity and inclusion.*

### What do you hope to see for the future of women in Ortho?

*The future of women in orthopedics is bright. I hope to see diversity and equity within the field continue to grow. Broadening representation within Orthopedics will both allow the field to become more welcoming to all groups, including the next generation of strong female leaders, and will improve patient care, research and outcomes.*

“  
The future of women in orthopaedics is bright  
”



**Dr. Rachel Thompson** Dr. Rachel Thompson is a Chicago native, who attended medical school at the George Washington University in Washington, DC, completed her residency in orthopaedic surgery at Northwestern University in Chicago, IL, her first fellowship in pediatric orthopaedics and scoliosis at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children in Dallas, TX and her second in neuromuscular orthopaedics at Nemours A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, DE. She additionally completed a traveling fellowship in adolescent and adult hip dysplasia in Aarhus, Denmark before joining the faculty at UCLA.

Dr. Thompson has published clinical peer-reviewed journal articles and textbook chapters in general orthopaedics, pediatric orthopaedics and neuromuscular orthopaedics. Dr. Thompson has generously shared her time with us discussing her experiences as a woman in Orthopaedic Surgery.

Dr. Thompson credits her female predecessors, saying that her “own experience as a woman in a male dominant field has been made much easier because of the work that women more senior did to open the door.”

She adds that she has been blessed with amazing female mentors, including Lori Karol and Vineeta Swaroop. “These women and other women that I have been honored to work with taught me to take up space and demand a seat at the table. They taught me that my opinions matter and to not “demure” to the men in the room. I have found that while it can, at times, be uncomfortable or lonely being the one woman at the table, it is important to have that seat and to provide my unique perspective and not shy away from it.”

“  
*blessed with amazing female mentors*  
”



# RACHEL THOMPSON, MD

Contemplating her leadership style, Dr. Thompson adds that it has been difficult to navigate finding her own leadership style, which is certainly different than most men's leadership styles. "I have learned that while I might approach leadership, surgical cases and communication differently than the men, I have to be true to myself rather than try to mimic my male counterparts." Despite extensive expertise, accolades, research, and mission work, Dr. Thompson notes that she is still met with challenges and finds it most frustrating when patients and colleagues meet her with disbelief in her abilities, pressing, "wait- you're a surgeon?"

*"In general, the most frustrating thing about being a woman in orthopaedics is still having patients (and many white male donors) assume that I am not a surgeon. While most patients understand that women can be surgeons, I still get the question (every so often), "wait – you're the surgeon!?" I have to remind myself to not get frustrated and realize that almost nobody is coming from a place of negativity but rather from a place of ignorance. It's a good teachable moment."*

Dr. Thompson notes the many positive changes in Ortho Surgery in recent years pertaining to the demographics, roles occupied by women, and attitudes towards female trainees. "I have seen WAY more female residents over the course of my career. When I was a resident, we had

*9 residents a year at Northwestern (45 in total), and I was one of 4 female residents with only 3 female faculty. The female residents baked for all of the boys on Fridays, and we had topless photos of women in our resident call room. Thankfully – we have now recruited 50% women in our residency class here the past two years, and our female residents are not treated like "work wives," forced to endure classic gender roles or worse at work. There are more women in leadership – more female Chairs and Program Directors – which have attracted more women to the field and allowed for more equitable representation."*

Looking back, Dr. Thompson has this advice to her younger self: "I would tell my teenage self to not take everything so personally. I spent a lot of time in medical school, residency and early in practice getting offended and mad at every ignorant comment or every off-hand remark that was down-putting toward women. I realize now that most of these comments and uncomfortable interactions are not based in mal-intent. Rather, they are based in ignorance. It never served me to get angry or incredulous. I would tell my younger self to breathe, laugh it off and then calmly and respectfully question and confront the offender so that they walked away having learned something (hopefully?) and, at the very least, perhaps questioning their own biases."

**Karen Lyons, PhD**, is the current Vice Chair of Research for the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. She is an award-winning published researcher with over 25 years of experience in cartilage and bone biology research.

### Why Orthopaedic Surgery?

*To be honest, I think Ortho chose me! While I was a postdoc, I was working on identifying the mammalian versions of genes that were required for establishing the body plan in fruit flies. By body plan, we are referring to how cells in the embryo know to develop into the correct tissues in the correct places. While doing this work, we stumbled onto some BMP (bone morphogenetic protein) genes. At the same time we were doing this work, it was discovered by a biotechnology company named Genetics Institute that these genes encode the proteins that cause stem cells to differentiate into bone-forming cells. As soon as we published my postdoctoral work, Dr. Marshall Urist called me. I learned at that time that Dr. Urist was the surgeon/ scientist at UCLA who originally discovered that certain cells in the body can induce new bone formation. It turns out that the genes I had discovered were the same ones that are required for bone formation in vertebrates. This result triggered my interest in learning more about bone*

*formation, and that led me to look at working in Ortho departments. My specific interest in UCLA was sparked by the late Dr. Urist, one of my first and most impactful mentors, and the discoverer of bone morphogenetic activity.*

*UCLA Ortho has been an outstanding scientific home for me*



**KAREN**  
**LYONS, PHD**





**What challenges did you face as a woman in Ortho Surgery, and how did you overcome adversity?**

*I think I faced the same challenges all women in academia face. These include the need to multitask, juggling career and family. There are also challenges associated with over commitment; I think women often take on organizational duties that are very time-consuming. My other challenge was that working as a researcher in a surgical department meant that there was not always the same level of support for bench research as in basic science departments. However, I think UCLA Ortho has been an outstanding scientific home for me. The clinical faculty have been open to ideas and the interactions with Luskin OIC faculty have been transformative. I have established a wonderful collaboration with Dr. Thomas Kremen, a surgeon/ scientist, and I enjoy interacting with researchers in Dr. Nick Bernthal's lab as well.*



**What do you hope to see in the future for women in Ortho?**

*I hope we see more women doing orthopaedic research. We are still under-represented. I hope to see more outreach to women to include them in collaborations and to appoint them to leadership roles. I think UCLA Ortho is ahead of the curve in these area.*



**Jennifer Zieba, PhD**, earned her PhD in human genetics at UCLA and is a project scientist in the UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. Her research is focused on identifying mutations and possible treatments for rare genetic musculoskeletal disorders.

### **Why Orthopaedic Surgery?**

*I chose orthopedic research because congenital musculoskeletal disorders often have severe long term effects on the survival and quality of life of patients as well as their families. Finding the pathogenesis behind these genetic disorders can not only help patients lives and family*

*planning, but also inform us of their effect outside the musculoskeletal system.*

### **What challenges did you face as a woman in Ortho?**

*While I have a wonderful mentor in Dr. Krakow, finding other support on the research side from someone who can understand what women face in science has been challenging. I am fortunate to have found female mentors and colleagues in other departments to help me along the way. Having a baby a year ago and all the postpartum physical issues that came with it has also been a major challenge in keeping up with my research. It has been difficult to get others to understand how these issues have hindered me since people rarely talk about postpartum women. I am again, fortunate to have understanding lab colleagues that have helped maintain our lab goals throughout this period.*

### **What do you hope to see in the future for women in Ortho?**

*I would like to see the Ortho research and Ortho clinic side interact academically on a more regular basis. There is a lot we can learn from each other and I, frankly, know very few people on the clinical side. I think research and patient care can significantly benefit if more than just faculty are included in these interactions.*



**JENNIFER**  
**ZIEBA, PHD**

**Dr. Nicole Hung**, is from Los Angeles, California. She received her medical degree University of California- San Francisco and currently in her third-year of residency with UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. Her clinical interest include upper extremity and hand, sports medicine, arthroplasty and oncology. When she's not in clinic or in the operating room, Nicole enjoys traveling, playing tennis and basketball, cooking, trying new restaurants with her wife and family, and spoiling her dog.

**Why Orthopaedic Surgery?**  
*I chose orthopaedic surgery because I wanted to dedicate my career to restoring function for others through a tangible solution while working in a team environment. What could be more rewarding than that!*

**What challenges did you face as a woman in Ortho?**  
*There are still specific biases against women in medicine in general, and these are amplified in a male-dominated surgical field like orthopaedics. For example, patients sometimes assume my female colleagues and I are not their surgeons but rather other members of their care team. Finding both male and female mentors and peers who are aware of these unique challenges has been critical in building my professional support system.*

“

*I hope we can make even greater progress with recruiting female medical students into the field*

”

**What do you hope to see in the future for women in Ortho?**  
*The representation of women in ortho is improving, albeit slowly. I hope we can make even greater progress with recruiting female medical students into the field while also improving the representation of women in leadership positions.*



**NICOLE HUNG, MD**

**Dr. Mathangi Sridharan** is from Strongsville, Ohio. She received her undergraduate degree from the Wharton School of the University Pennsylvania and her medical degree from the Ohio State University College of Medicine. She is currently a third-year resident with UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. Her clinical interest include shoulder/ elbow, sports, joints, cost effectiveness and clinical outcomes research. She enjoys Peloton, boxing, reading and the beach.

### **Why Orthopaedic Surgery?**

*I chose orthopaedic surgery because of its ability to restore form and function, as well as the versatility of the surgical procedures. The people in orthopedic surgery are also incredible to work with.*

### **What challenges did you face as a woman in Ortho?**

*Personally, I have found that women in orthopaedic surgery are less likely to be identified as doctors in the room and more likely to have their role or ability to perform their job questioned.*

*I am reassured that the role and presence of women in this field is growing significantly, and at UCLA ortho, I have many highly skilled female surgeons to look up to. I have also had the privilege of having several mentors through medical school that helped me develop the skills and confidence to be in orthopedic surgery. I have found in residency that male colleagues and superiors who actively support and promote the abilities of their female co-workers is a powerful force in overcoming adversity.*

### **What do you hope to see in the future for women in Ortho?**

*I hope to see more accomplished female orthopedic surgeons in national leadership positions and within private practice. I also hope for continued growth in maternity care and parental leave in orthopedic surgery.*

“

*I have many highly skilled female surgeons to look up to.*

”



**MATHANGI**  
**SRIDHARAN, MD**

**Sam Chin Hoang** is the Chief Financial Officer of UCLA Orthopaedic Surgery.

**Why Orthopaedic Surgery?**

*Orthopaedic Surgery is a dynamic field, evolving with advancements in technology, adaptive equipment, and new innovative methods to improve patient’s mobility and quality of life. Financial professionals play a pivotal role in optimizing cost-effective strategies for the best patient care environment. UCLA is an R1 institution that allows Orthopaedic Surgery to perform ground-breaking, clinical research, allowing researchers to apply real-world treatments to patients more quickly. As financial/research administrators, we would be directly working with the researchers to acquire extramural funds and manage the funding for the research. The sense of contributing to medical advancements adds a gratifying aspect to the work, making it intellectually stimulating and more socially impactful.*

**What challenges did you face as a woman in leadership?**

*I feel fortunate that I have not felt disadvantaged as a woman in this department, possibly due to my leadership role as CFO. However, I did go through a period in my career where I experienced gender bias, unequal opportunities for advancement, and lack of representation in leadership roles. It created an environment that taught me to fight and work harder to be heard.*

*I am earnest believer in creating a workplace culture that values and rewards talent regardless of gender.*

**What do you hope to see in the future for women in Ortho?**

*I hope to see more representation and diversity in this field that is traditionally dominated by male. Women often bring unique insights, empathy, and more communication skills, contributing to a more comprehensive and inclusive healthcare environment. Additionally, they offer valuable perspective by bridging the gender gap in patient-doctor relationships. Having diverse perspectives in healthcare is crucial for well-rounded patient care.*



**SAM CHIN**  
**HOANG, CFO**

**Summer Swearingen** is a research coordinator in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery supporting the musculoskeletal and sarcoma teams. She works mainly in the Soragni Lab under the supervision of Alice Soragni, PhD.

**Why did you pick healthcare?**

*I have always been fascinated by biology and physiology so healthcare always seemed the right fit for me. Being part of an industry that helps people live better/healthier lives and offers cutting edge technology is very important to me.*

**What challenges did you face as a woman in healthcare, and how did you overcome adversity?**

*I would have to say maybe not always being felt heard or necessarily taken seriously as a woman in healthcare leadership. This has taught me to be persistent and to be firm when necessary.*

**What do you hope to see in the future for women in healthcare?**

*I have been fortunate myself to work with and be mentored by many women physicians and scientists and did not necessarily experience a male dominated workforce compared to that of my mentors. As I continue to work in healthcare, I am happy to see that it is more inclusive of women and does not seem to be so one sided. I definitely see it moving into a more equal direction, but I would hope to see that women working in healthcare are receiving equal salaries as those of their male counterparts.*



“

*This has taught me to be persistent and to be firm when necessary.*

”

**SUMMER  
SWEARINGEN**

**Linda Zigman is a patient care coordinator in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery,** supporting the Trauma Division as Dr. Eric Johnson's clinical practice care coordinator.

**Why did you pick healthcare?**

*I obtained my AA degree from SM College and then worked at a preschool in Beverly Hills. I worked with my sister at an orthopaedic surgeons' office, in the afternoon and that is how I began my career in the medical field. I then worked for a pediatrician at Cedars for approximately 5 years and then applied for an AA position with Dr. Harlan Amstutz at UCLA. I was with Dr. Amstutz for approximately 4.5 years and went with him down to an Orthopaedic Hospital. At that time in my life, I wanted to come back to UCLA and I heard Dr. Johnson was looking for a new assistant. I did not know Dr. Johnson too well at that time. I recall speaking to him one time in the elevator. I wanted to go back to working at UCLA as it is such a wonderful institution, has great benefits, and is closer to home. Being with Dr. Johnson over 32 years, has been a great association.*

**What challenges did you face as a woman in healthcare, and how did you overcome adversity?**

*Speaking my mind, in a professional manner helped me overcome adversity. I am a person who likes to*

*be organized in my own office and enjoy being a team player with my co-workers. It is rewarding to help patients thrive whether it is post surgical intervention due to a trauma or just a non-operative fracture. Hearing comments from patients throughout the years, remind me that they want to be assured that they have someone to trust during their time under medical care.*

**What do you hope to see in the future for women in healthcare?**

*I have seen more women come into the program as physicians. Orthopaedics is no longer just a boys' club. From observation, it seems that more women will continue to work in the orthopaedic field in many capacities.*



**LINDA  
ZIGMAN**

# ANNA

VERGUN, MD



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

*Buttered daikon is Dr. Anna Vergun's favorite dish to make as a home chef. It's one of many things she does when she's not painting abstract art, raising three children, tending to her horses, in the operating room, on international medical tours, or when she's not co-leading the Pediatric Orthopedic and Educational Training Program.*

**Dr. Anna Vergun** was born in Santa Monica, California, and raised in Oregon. She received her undergraduate degree in Chemistry at Smith College and medical degree from Cornell Medical School. In 2009, she completed her residency

with the prestigious UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery then went on to complete two international fellowships at Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgery, Hospital of Sick Children in Toronto, Canada and Hip Preservation, Schulthess, Klinik in Zurich, Switzerland, respectively.

Dr. Vergun practiced at Shriners' Children Hospital for four years, and now practices at the University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill, for the past ten years, serving as Division Chief of Pediatric Orthopaedics. She is the former president of ACPOC,



*Association of Children's Prosthetic-Orthotic Clinic, and current President of the Pediatric Ortho and Education Training Program.*

I asked, "Why did you pick Ortho?", she answered, "I picked Ortho because it was a fascinating mix of biomechanics, material science, and biology. It's satisfying to have a goal that improves mobility and function. Honestly, I love almost every field of medicine, and it was difficult to choose but this is where my brain and hands felt most at home". Her clinical interests include children born with limb deformities and amputees. When she's not in clinic and operating in North Carolina, she's on international medical tours serving underserved socioeconomic families in the Middle East in efforts to improve access to subspecialty surgical care. While serving in these countries, Dr. Vergun also teaches. As President of the Pediatric Ortho and Education Training Program, she has built a fellowship program and an on-ground facility that serves the West Bank and Gaza.

After chatting on the phone with Dr. Vergun, learning of all her accomplishments and passions, I was left to wonder what challenges she must have faced as woman in Ortho. So, I asked her.

*"I don't think I recognized the many challenges until later in my career. In*

*the beginning, there was the novelty factor that was always noted, but it never really felt like it got in the way of my learning or participation. It was the smaller things later, like getting frequently interrupted at meetings or spending more time on patient care*



*in areas that aren't reimbursable, but felt important. The result is you feel, it's like you're working just as hard everyone else but your work RVUs are less. It has been equally frustrating to see younger (male)*

*partners with less experience getting promoted or invited to speak at meetings that will obviously help promote their careers. It's a little bit hard to believe it still happens but it does. Finally, work life balance is*



*hard for everyone, but especially when you're a mom. When I come home to my kids, they still want their mom. After a full day of working and operating I come home and make dinner for five people then sit down*

*and help them with their homework. It's a long day! As it turns out, you really can't 'do it all', at least all at once. Being a female surgeon with all of the directions we get pulled, you have to be OK with not always doing your best job. It's ok and often enough that you do a good job. Save your best for when it matters the most."*

While Dr. Vergun's career and life seems as though she's a superhero dressed in ordinary garb, her experience as a woman in Ortho is one that is shared with many women in their respective fields. I asked, her what she hopes to see for future of women in Ortho, and she said, *"I'd like to see, of course, more women in orthopedics! But that alone is not enough. I'd like to see better representation of women and minorities in orthopedics and all of medicine, especially in leadership positions!"*



Watercolor paintings and cover art are samples of Dr. Vergun's own work.

**WELCOME**

# NEW MEDICAL TEAM MEMBERS

Welcome to our new hires as of Spring 2024!  
As the department continues to expand, we strive to build a team of  
passionate and talented members!



**AMANDA HONSVALL-  
HOEFLER, MD  
SPORTS MEDICINE**



**BRIAN DONOHOE, MD  
SPORTS MEDICINE**



**JONATHAN  
DROESSLER, MD  
INTERVENTIONAL  
SPINE**



**TIMOTHY SCHAUB, MD  
HAND SURGERY**



**FRANK  
PETRGILIANO, MD  
SPORTS SURGERY**

# NEW STAFF TEAM MEMBERS



**TYLER SCHMITZ**  
Program Coordinator,  
Education

*My hobbies and interests include cooking, running, skiing, rock climbing, and playing music. A fun fact about me is that I went skiing at least once in every month of 2022.*



**NICHOLAS GONZALES**  
Westwood  
Clinic Manager

*"I have worked in healthcare for over 25 years. I've enjoy coaching youth sports for over 15 years, and I am a huge Los Angeles Dodgers and UCLA Bruins fan."*

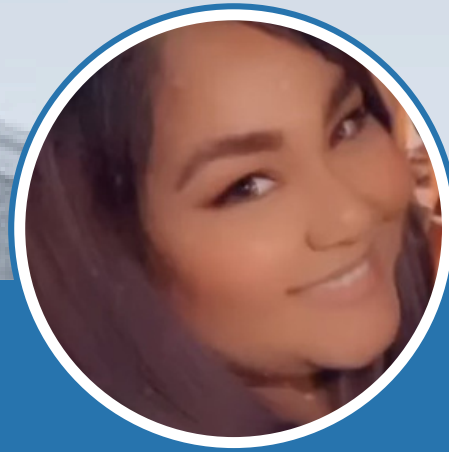


**JONATHAN SOTOJ**  
Westwood  
Front Desk

*"I love to make people smile. I always strive to learn new things and help out everyone."*



**IVEREN BAJAH**  
Clinical Operations  
Manager



**SYLVIA REMIAS**  
Santa Monica  
Front Desk

*"I have over 10 years experience in the medical field. I'm a mother of 2 teenage girls fun facts about me I am part Hawaiian, Filipino, Mexican and I love watching my daughter play softball."*



**PATRICK SIMPAUCO**  
Fund Manager



**DANIELLE BARTLETT**  
Director of Clinical  
Operations



**ALESSANDRA SILVA**  
Ortho Admin Analyst

Fun facts: I'm a new plant mom, I love going to concerts (of any genre) and like to sketch/graphic design in my free time.



**ERIKA GOMEZ**  
HR Specialist



**LINDSAY  
PIETRUSZEWSKI**

Research

*"My research and clinical interests include neurodevelopmental disorders, infant motor development, and helping children and adults of all ages participate fully in the things they love to do!"*



**PETER GUO**  
Staff Research  
Associate



**DIAMOND WILSON**

Patient Care Coordinator

*"I came to UCLA Health in January 2023 to be a part of a great company who exhibits great qualities of healthcare. I love the medical field and have a passion for healthcare and looking forward to seeing where my career goes."*



**ISRAEL MONICO**  
Medical Scribe



**KIMBERLY RENTERIA**

Patient Care Coordinator

*"When I'm not keeping busy with school or work you'll often find me baking, hiking, or enjoying quality time with my nieces, either playing with makeup or watching Disney movies all day."*



**YIRAN DENG**  
Lab Assistant

*"Some fun facts about me: I have a minor in film which I enjoy, and I have a chocolate labrador named Chocolate (named by my little brother)."*



**NNAMDI MBANUGO**  
Community Access Navigator

*"Fun Facts: I've been playing guitar for 17yrs and love snowboarding and rollerblading."*



**MARISOL VILLALOBOS**  
Front Desk

*"My Favorite part is doing home "DIY" with my lovely Wife, gardening and spending quality time with my family. I look foward to this new chapter in my career."*



**SARAYA SCRUGGS**  
Medical Scribe

*"Some fun facts about me are that i'm a cat mom and i enjoy playing piano in my free time. I'm so excited to join the team and can't wait to meet you all!"*



**AMY VIRREY**  
Medical Scribe

*"I recently moved to LA from San Jose, CA. I am currently building my resume, as I intend to apply for PA school in the near future. I am a fitness enthusiast, animal lover, and a world traveler."*



**DIEGO DELA PENA**  
Medical Scribe



**JAKOB DEROSA**  
Saff Research



**SAIVAISHNAVI  
NEELAGIRI**  
Medical Scribe

*"I am excited and honored to work here to continue to learn about the wonderful dynamics of clinical/surgical medicine and practice!"*



# FACULTY FARWELL

Join us in wishing faculty members onto the next chapters in their lives!



## DON PARK, MD

*To the staff, residents, and faculty of UCLA Orthopaedic Surgery,*

*I would like to say my final farewell to everyone at UCLA. It has been a truly life changing experience for me over the past 8+ years at UCLA. Through my time at UCLA, I learned so much about who I am as a surgeon, mentor, educator, and colleague. The experiences here at UCLA has molded me into the person that I am now and I am so appreciative of it. I gave everything that I could to UCLA during my time here and I am very proud of what I have accomplished. I will always remember my time at UCLA. I am so grateful to have worked with each and every one of you and I hope that I made an impact to you and this department.*

*To the residents: I am sad that I cannot watch you all become the amazing surgeons that I know that you will become. I'm sure that I will see you again in the near future. It has been a pleasure working with you and teaching you a little about spine surgery and more importantly, what it is to be a good doctor and surgeon to your patients. I hope that I was able to make an impression with you as my mentors made on me.*

*Although it is bittersweet that I am closing this chapter of my career at my alma mater, I am very excited about what is to come for me and my family in Orange County and UC Irvine. I know that the department is in great hands with Dr. Bernthal and I know that the department will reach the great heights that I hoped to see while I was at UCLA.*

*Thank you so much for everything. I will never forget my time at UCLA.*

*Sincerely,  
Don Park*



# AJAY GURBANI, MD

*Thank you to the UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery for being a home to me during my training, from medical school to residency, and for welcoming me back to start my practice. I have learned so much from all of you and my experiences here. You have been not only colleagues and mentors, but also great friends.*

*I wish the department and each of you continued success and happiness. Please keep in touch - I am always happy to receive a call or text from you all.*

Dr. Neil Jones, a hand surgeon and microsurgeon, professor of Orthopaedic and Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, has retired from UCLA this year. Dr. Jones is nationally and internationally renowned for complex hand surgery and microsurgical reconstruction with a major interest in tendon transfers, nerve repairs, toe-to-hand transfers and microsurgical reconstruction of the upper extremity and his unparalleled experience in reconstruction of children's hand deformities with complex microsurgical reconstruction of the forearm, wrist, and hand.

Dr. Jones has received the Orthopaedic Living Tree award at this year's graduation ceremony as recognition of his lifelong achievement and contribution into the field of Orthopaedic Surgery.



# NEIL JONES, MD

*Dearest Friends, Colleagues and Residents,*

*It has been an absolute honor to begin my academic career here at UCLA Orthopaedics, and I am so very grateful for the past 7+ years that I spent with you all. I have made friends, gained skills and learned innumerable lessons in my time here. As I reflect on the past 7 years, I am filled with gratitude for the mentorship, support and trust that I experienced on a daily basis. It has been a joy to work alongside such dedicated colleagues, talented staff, and bright trainees who have inspired me every day. I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your unwavering collaboration and camaraderie throughout the years.*

*I am very proud of the work that we have done collectively to support our resident education during my time as Residency Program Director, and I am very grateful for all of the efforts that have been made to support our forward progress. I know that I asked a lot from both the faculty and the residents, but our efforts have paid off, and our residents are thriving. It has been a privilege to work with all of you to ensure that our residents are not only excellent technical surgeons but also compassionate, forward-thinking doctors, researchers and advocates. I am sad that I will not have a front row seat to watch our junior residents blossom during their remaining time at UCLA, but I am confident that they will find great success with Dr. Petrigliano's guidance. I extend my best wishes to each and every one of you for continued success, growth, and fulfillment in all your endeavors. I hope to continue to collaborate with many of you as I head down south. Thank you for being a part of my journey here - it has been an honor and a privilege.*

*Warm regards,  
RMT*



**RACHEL  
THOMPSON, MD**

# UCLA ORTHO SURGERY NEWSLETTER

## Tell us your story!

For inquiries and submissions email us:  
[OrthoNewsletter@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:OrthoNewsletter@mednet.ucla.edu)

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**Ksenia Kurnakova, MPH**  
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**Alessandra Silva**  
Associate Editor, Writer and Associate Digital Director

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