

'Leap of faith' launches a rewarding career

FEDA awardee focuses on service to children



Dr. Mark Miller shares a smile with a patient

Dr. Mark A. Miller – newly appointed Associate Dean for Hospital Affairs, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Program Director and Associate Professor at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) – was recruited to help expand MUSC’s capacity to care for children with complex cleft and craniofacial anomalies. His new role is a world away from the career in family and cosmetic dentistry he envisioned as a teenager in Calvert City, Ky.

He discovered his life’s calling while serving as a dentist with the U.S. Army in 2006. Stunned by the rampant poverty of Afghanistan, he was inspired to do all he could to help improve the lives of the people – especially the children – he encountered daily. Two years later while serving in Iraq, he met Dr. Barry Steinberg, a fellow reservist, OMS and pediatric craniomaxillofacial surgeon from the University of Florida (UF) College of Medicine – Jacksonville. Dr. Miller found his passion witnessing – and assisting with – surgeries that changed the

course of young patients’ lives. “I realized that this OMS had the best job in the world. Every day he gets up and changes children’s lives forever. That was what I wanted to do.”

In a self-described “leap of faith,” Dr. Miller spent all 15 days of R&R during his deployment interviewing to OMS residency programs. Accepted at UF – Jacksonville, he completed his OMS residency under Dr. Steinberg, followed by a pediatric craniomaxillofacial fellowship with Dr. Ramon L. Ruiz at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children in Orlando. “There’s something magical about a children’s hospital,” he said. “I knew I had found my calling.”

The opportunity to treat children and train surgeons with similar aspirations took Dr. Miller to the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA), where he found himself doing (mostly) what he loved, seven days a week, just to make ends meet. Dividing his time between UTHSCSA, the Army Reserves and extracurricular teaching gigs left him with little time for personal or professional development.

Dr. Edward Ellis III, OMS Department Chair at UTHSCSA, suggested he apply for a Faculty Educator Development Award (FEDA) grant to ease the financial burden.

Jointly funded by AAOMS and the OMS Foundation, FEDA offers \$40,000

per year for three years to promising early-career OMS faculty to encourage them to stay in academia. While the cash disbursement is a major draw, FEDA was designed to prep, train and inspire OMS academicians to expand their horizons and rise to leadership in the specialty’s vitally important academic institutions.

The rigorous application process often stretches over four to five years and requires annually updated documentation of published research, institutional engagement and leadership. “FEDA gave me time for research, but the institutional roles I pursued to meet my FEDA application requirements strengthened my candidacy for the MUSC position,” Dr. Miller said. “My understanding of revenue cycles, contract negotiations and clinical efficiencies was key to consideration for the Associate Dean position.”

Dr. Miller has, in turn, encouraged his OMS junior faculty to apply for a FEDA, knowing the grants will give them opportunities to grow, excel and shine. He is grateful to every donor for facilitating the Foundation’s annual investments in FEDA, and he is paying it forward with his own annual gifts. “Every day I get up and feel like I’m doing the right thing. I get to make a difference in children’s lives, and train others to do the same. It’s an honor and a privilege to do what I do, and I never take it for granted.” ■

Contact us

info@omsfoundation.org • OMSFoundation.org • 847-233-4304



Brett Ferguson,
DDS, FACS
Foundation Chair

For 22 years, AAOMS's Faculty Educator Development Award (FEDA) has spurred our specialty's most promising junior faculty to expand their ambitions, build their curricula vitae and apply their aptitude and passion for research and academic excellence to advance our specialty. AAOMS has awarded 86 FEDA grants since the program's debut in 2002; the Foundation signed on as a financial collaborator in 2011. We've invested \$2.9 million to date, funding 14 of the 28 FEDA grants disbursed since 2016. Upon successful completion of a rigorous application process, awardees receive \$40,000 per year for three years in exchange for a six-year commitment to remain in academia.

FEDA yields high returns on investment

The returns on these investments are on display across our academic sector. Past FEDA recipients currently chair the Foundation's Committee on Research (Dr. Brent Ward, 2004, also the Chair of AAOMS's Committee on Education and Training and Committee on Oral Head and Neck Oncologic Reconstructive Surgery), OMS Faculty Section (Dr. Donita Dyalram, 2014) and Committee on Research Planning and Technology Assessment (Dr. Joli Chou, 2012). Six current ABOMS directors were supported on their path toward leadership by FEDA, along with two current OMS chairs, 24 residency program directors and a clinical director at the National Institutes of Health. Many recipients subsequently pursued Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQs) from ABOMS in pediatric craniomaxillofacial surgery or head and neck oncologic and reconstructive surgery.

Our specialty's top researchers – including Drs. Tara Aghaloo, Brian Schmidt, Chi Viet and Simon Young, to name a few – are FEDA awardees. The FEDA roster includes 66 dual-degree

OMs, 23 female OMs, two past ABOMS presidents and a past OMS dean.

This issue's cover story showcases one of our specialty's rising stars, Dr. Mark Miller, a gifted pediatric craniomaxillofacial surgeon, committed academician and Foundation donor. Dr. Miller's 2020 FEDA grant facilitated his deep dive into neuroplastic reconstructive surgery and virtual surgical planning, and it helped prepare him for his new dual-leadership role at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). His compassion and surgical expertise profoundly impacted his patients and colleagues at UT Health's San Antonio campus. His move to MUSC opens the door to unprecedented access to care for children in South Carolina afflicted with craniofacial anomalies or trauma and perhaps to a new center of excellence in neuroplastic reconstructive surgery that will advance both our specialty and the wider medical community.

As a Foundation donor, you are helping to write these academic success stories,

even if your last contact with academia was the day you graduated from residency. Each of us has a part to play in strengthening and sustaining the OMS specialty. The majority of AAOMS members are not – and don't aspire to be – academic superstars. But we all have gifts, resources and a responsibility to apply them to support the greater good of our specialty.

U.S. Oral Surgery Management has generously offered to match every gift to the Foundation received May 1 to June 30 up to a total of \$35,000. Your mid-year gift will underwrite our continued support of FEDA and an array of other worthwhile programs that affirm our aspirations to excellence as oral and maxillofacial surgeons. Today is a good day to be generous. I can promise you will be uplifted by the experience, and the aspiring overachievers relying on your support will be grateful. ■



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Back row from left: Dr. David Basi, Ms. Karin Wittich, Drs. Brett Ferguson, Jeffrey Wallen, Debra Sacco and James Baker

Front row from left: Drs. Rawle Philbert, Jasjit Dillon, Martin Eichner and Peter Vellis.

Not pictured: Dr. Gary Bouloux and Dr. Artem Krutyansky (ROAAOMS Liaison)

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GIVE recipient reflects on global surgical experience



Dr. Vickas Agarwal, 2023 GIVE recipient

By Vickas Agarwal, DDS, MD

Traveling to Dhaka, Bangladesh, with the Smile Bangladesh team was a milestone for me, made possible through a Global Initiative for Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) grant from the OMS Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of the Foundation’s donors, I was able to fulfill my longstanding aspiration to engage in global surgery by participating in a mission trip.

I have long been drawn to the idea of contributing to surgical care in underserved communities worldwide.

However, financial constraints often hindered such endeavors, especially during residency. The grant from the OMS Foundation alleviated this burden, providing for my travel expenses and essential support for accommodation, meals and supplies. Without this assistance, joining Smile Bangladesh in Dhaka would have been nearly impossible.

“I am filled with gratitude”

The funds not only facilitated my travel but also allowed me to actively participate in the mission of providing vital surgical care to those in need. Every patient we treated underscored the impact of our presence and the importance of our work.

Equally valuable was the opportunity to work alongside mentors with diverse backgrounds from outside my program. Gaining exposure to different techniques to accomplish the same goals gave me new perspectives, and collaborating with the dedicated professionals of Smile Bangladesh provided insights beyond just surgical techniques. Their commitment

to their community and resilience in challenging circumstances left a lasting impression on me.

Reflecting on my time in Dhaka, I am filled with gratitude – for the opportunity to serve, for the lessons learned and for my generous colleagues who helped make this experience possible. It has reinforced my commitment to global surgery and deepened my understanding of the profound impact we can make when we come together to serve those in need. ■



L-R Drs. Shahid Aziz and Vickas Agarwal

Paying tribute to longtime donors to OMS Foundation

The OMS Foundation extends a heartfelt thank you to these steadfast donors, who have supported its mission with a gift each year for 20 years or more.

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Dr. Stuart Lieblich
1955 – 2024

In memory of Dr. Stuart Lieblich

Thank you to the many AAOMS members who have donated to the OMS Foundation in memory of Dr. Stuart Lieblich.

Tribute donations are a meaningful way to honor a loved one, colleague or mentor while supporting the Foundation’s mission. Feeling grateful to a colleague? Honor them with a tribute gift.

There are numerous ways to donate to the OMS Foundation, and today’s economy has inspired many donors to “think outside the checkbook.”

Visit [OMSFoundation.org/Ways-to-Give](https://www.omsfoundation.org/Ways-to-Give) to learn about giving options.



2024 awards for research, education announced



The OMS Foundation Board of Directors approved an array of programs for funding in 2024. These include:

- Research Support Grants (one-year duration, \$75,000 each)
 - Providence Health & Services (Stephen B. Milam Research Award recipient) *"Bioresponsive hydrogel enhances adoptive T cell therapy against head and neck squamous cell carcinoma"*
 - Principal investigator: Di Wen, PhD
 - Co-principal investigators: R. Bryan Bell, MD, DDS, FACS, FRCS(Ed); Andrew D. Weinberg, PhD
 - University of North Carolina *"Evaluating Impacts of Orthognathic Surgery on Velopharyngeal Function and Speech in Class III Dentofacial Disharmony Patients with Repaired Cleft Lip and Palate"*
 - Principal investigator: Laura A. Jacox, DMD, PhD, MS
 - Co-principal investigators: Timothy A. Turvey, DDS, FACS; George H. Blakey III, DDS; Renie Daniel, DMD, MD, FACS; David J. Zajac, PhD; Di Wu, PhD; Jeff Mielke, PhD
- Support of Resident Transitions into Practice Conference (\$5,000)
- Resident Travel Scholarships (10, \$1,000 each)
- Norma L. Kelly Resident Spouse Scholarship (nine, \$1,000 each)
- Global Initiative for Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) stipends (10, \$2,500 each) ■

Additional disbursements will help to recruit and train OMS residents, welcome their families to the AAOMS community and strengthen the specialty's academic sector:

- Student Research Training Award (one, \$12,500)
 - Massachusetts General Hospital
- Faculty Educator Development Awards (FEDA) (two, \$135,000 each)



Applications for 2025 funding awards are due Aug. 31 at

OMSFoundation.org. Apply now for:

- Clinical Research Support Grant (two-year duration, \$150,000)
- Research Support Grants (one-year duration, \$75,000)
- Student Research Training Awards (two-year duration, \$12,500)

*Consideration of applications for the 2025 Clinical Research Support Grant is limited to those addressing either dental implants or anesthesia/patient safety.

Featured volunteers: Professional Association Management, Inc. (PAMI)

The Professional Association Management, Inc. (PAMI) team, led by President James W. (Hank) Holderfield, has provided administrative leadership and management services to multiple OMS Societies in District III for more than 40 years, and recently added the Maryland and Middle Atlantic OMS Societies to its client list.

PAMI's commitment to providing the Foundation with space in the exhibit hall and time on the agenda at OMS Society meetings creates invaluable engagement

opportunities for the Foundation. Also, PAMI Associate Executive Director Melissa Connor's communications expertise ensures Foundation updates and appeals are readily available to PAMI's client Society members.

"We feel strongly that the education and research supported by the OMS Foundation are critical to the future of the OMS specialty," Mr. Holderfield says, "and we're proud to support the Foundation's mission." ■



Hank Holderfield receiving his AAOMS Honorary Fellowship from Dr. Paul Schwartz



DONATE NOW to double your impact! Every gift received by June 30 – **including tribute gifts** – will be matched by USOSM, up to a total of \$35,000.



Mark your calendar!

OMS Foundation activities at the 2024 AAOMS Annual Meeting

The OMS Foundation looks forward to welcoming AAOMS members, families and friends to the 2024 AAOMS Annual Meeting. Here's where to engage with the Foundation during the meeting:

- **OMS Foundation Booth**
 - Sept. 9 to 11 in the House of Delegates lobby
 - Sept. 12 to 14 at Exhibit Hall Booth 1430
- **Poster Session/Wine & Cheese Reception**
 - Sept. 12, 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Exhibit Hall
- **Faculty Lunch and Learn**
 - Sept. 13, noon to 1 p.m., Convention Center
Topic: OMS Applicant Assessment: Concept of Connected Outcomes
- **R.V. Walker Donor Recognition Reception (by invitation)**
 - Sept. 13, 6 to 7 p.m., Hyatt Regency Orlando

OMS Foundation Alliance events at the 2024 AAOMS Annual Meeting

All Alliance events support the Global Initiative for Volunteerism and Education (GIVE)

- **2024 Alliance Luncheon and FUNraiser for GIVE**
 - Sept. 12, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 - Primo at JW Marriott Orlando, Grande Lakes
 - Featured speakers:
 - 2024 GIVE awardee
 - JW Marriott chef: "Integrating sustainability into a luxury brand"
 - Register by Aug. 15 for early-bird pricing at OMSFoundation.org/Alliance-events
- **Alliance Daily Health Walks**
 - Sept. 11 to 13, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.
 - Depart from Hyatt Regency Orlando
 - Off-site registration option: Walk at a time/place of your choosing
 - Register at OMSFoundation.org/Alliance-events
- **OMS Foundation Alliance Networking Breakfasts**
 - Sept. 11 to 13, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
 - Health Walk participants invited to enjoy complimentary breakfast at a local restaurant ■







JOIN US IN ORLANDO!


Scan to register!

Annual Luncheon and FUNraiser for GIVE at **Primo**, a Michelin-recommended dining destination. Sept. 12 • 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; *Register by Aug. 15 for early-bird discount.*


Need assistance? Email lcohen@omsfoundation.org or call 847-233-4243.



Special Thanks to 2024 ALLIANCE Supporters

Dr. James & Angie Henderson

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All proceeds from Alliance 2024 events support GIVE.

Your donations at work: 2024 Resident Transitions into Practice Conference

The OMS Foundation proudly supported the AAOMS 2024 Resident Transitions into Practice Conference with a \$5,000 program grant and Resident Travel Scholarships, reimbursing up to \$1,000 in documented travel expenses for 10 OMS residents attending the Conference. ■





Travel Scholarship recipients and attendees at the AAOMS Resident Transitions into Practice Conference

Featured Donors: Dr. Matthew and Krista Fowlkes



Dr. Matthew W. and Krista Fowlkes and family

“Former AAOMS President and OMS Foundation Director Eric Geist, DDS, FACS, has been a mentor, business partner and friend to our family. His love for the Foundation inspired us to give monthly to the OMSFIRE campaign and establish a legacy commitment with our estate planning. The Foundation’s mission makes it the perfect vehicle for giving back to our specialty, and we hope our AAOMS colleagues will be inspired to join us in supporting it.”

– Matthew W. Fowlkes, DMD, MD, and Krista Fowlkes
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Featured Corporate donor: Preferred MedSurg



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From left: Jacob Mendenhall, DDS, FACS; Peter Carlson, DDS; Alan Miyake, DDS, MD; Andrew McGarry, DDS (not pictured: Bryce Lamer, DDS)

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“OKC-OMS shares the Foundation’s commitment to research-based standards of care. As OMSFIRE donors, we’re helping to ensure that our practice – and our specialty – is equipped to provide exemplary care to our patients and the communities we serve.”
– OKC-OMS

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