



Honored and Humbled

Dr. Gerald R. Williams



I remember exactly where I was when Dr. Levin informed me of the decision to dedicate this year's University of Pennsylvania Department of Orthopedics Journal to me. I was sitting in Jay Parvizi's research office having just finished a Board conference call for the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. It was the end of a long day and what Dr. Levin had just told me hadn't quite registered. As I thanked him for the honor and hung up the phone, the importance of the moment suddenly hit me and I thought: "why me?" There are so many others who are more deserving than I. In fact, I began thinking of all the famous surgeons and researchers who have graced the halls of your storied department—past and present—and felt incredibly insignificant.

Brighton, Steinberg(s), Lotke, Heppenstall, Torg, Sennett, Cuckler, Glasgow(s), Esterhai, Iannotti, Soslowsky, Kaplan, DeLong, Born, Lackman, Friedenberg, Bora, Osterman, Bednar, Ramsey, Getz, Glaser, Israelite, Nelson, Bozentka, Okereke—and these are just the names of the people I actually worked with. I began thinking that I should know more about the department's history so I googled it. I shouldn't have been surprised that I found an article entitled *The History of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania* written by Dr. Zachary Friedenberg and published in your journal in 2002. I suspect you have all read it but if you haven't, you should. Here is the link: upoj.org/wp-content/uploads/v15/v15_16.pdf. I am sure you know that your department was the first in the United States—started by DeForest Willard

in 1889. You may not know that, in part, it was funded by a \$4,000,000—in 1889!—endowment from Peter (P.A.B.) Widener, who was a wealthy Philadelphia businessman who made his money in, among other things, streetcars. As a side note, two of his sons perished on the Titanic. The first resident started at the end of the tenure of Arthur Bruce Gill (1920-1942). As we all know, the residency has flourished under the influence of many.

I came to Penn in August of 1991. Officially, I was recruited by Dr. Joseph Iannotti. However, I know there were others who supported me—Dr. Heppenstall, Dr. Torg. Dr. Brighton was the chair who hired me and I am forever grateful. My career flourished during my time at Penn. I was fortunate to have worked with everyone there, especially Dr. Iannotti, Dr. Soslowsky, Dr. Ramsey, Dr. Getz, and Dr. Glaser. As I left in January of 2007, your spectacular current chairman, Dr. L. Scott Levin was just starting. He is one of the most outstanding leaders I have had the pleasure of knowing. He is a dear friend and I am very proud of him.

Finally, when James Friedman, MD, a current third year resident, asked me to write something in response to this dedication, I really struggled with what I should say. Truly, I feel like a sapling among redwoods. After some thought, I came to the conclusion that maybe I should just say thank you. You must know that I received from my relationship with your department much more than I gave. I am truly honored and humbled.