

The Perry Initiative at Penn

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On February 20 & 21, 2015 the University of Pennsylvania Department of Orthopaedic Surgery hosted the Perry Initiative to include both a Medical Student Outreach Program and High School Student Outreach Program. The Perry Initiative mission is to inspire young women to pursue careers in engineering and orthopaedics, as they are fields in which women are under-represented. It is named after Dr. Jacqueline Perry (1919-2013). She was one of the first women in orthopedics, but more importantly, she dedicated her life to research, education and providing excellent orthopaedic care to children and adults with neuromuscular disorders such as cerebral palsy or deficits following traumatic brain injury or stroke. Leaders like Dr. Perry are few and far between and she is deeply missed, but her legacy continues. The Perry Initiative was founded in 2009 by Dr. Jenni Buckley, a mechanical engineer currently at the University of Delaware, and Dr. Lisa Lattanza, an orthopaedic upper extremity surgeon at University of California, San Francisco. Since its inception, their program has grown exponentially and is currently run by a staff of engineers based out of the University of Delaware.

This is the second time Penn has hosted the Perry Initiative, and the events were well attended. Medical students from

multiple schools in the Philadelphia area were in attendance on Friday evening. The students were introduced to the lives of women orthopaedic surgeons, both in training and in practice. They participated in hands on workshops focused on intramedullary and external fixation of femur fractures, and the evening commenced with an interactive panel discussion. High school students from central and southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware were in attendance on Saturday. The program included workshops on suturing and knot tying, external fixation, intramedullary nailing, scoliosis correction, pelvic fracture fixation and knee arthroscopy. The engineers shared with the group the pathway to become an engineer and the many opportunities that exist within this diverse field. The orthopaedic surgeons shared the pathway to becoming a physician and then an orthopedic surgeon. Volunteers for the event included women orthopaedic residents and students from U. Pennsylvania (5) and Drexel (1) and faculty from U. Pennsylvania (4), Thomas Jefferson (1), and Drexel (1). A great time was had by all in attendance. The Perry Initiative is a 501c3 non-profit funded primarily via donation. More information can be found at: <http://perryinitiative.org/> and donations are accepted via the website.

