Benjamin Canales, MD receives prestigious 2016 American Urological Association Gold Cystoscope Award

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Message from the Chair

Dear Friends, Colleagues and UroGator Alumni,

We have had an excellent start to the 2016 academic year with regards to all of our department missions. From a clinical standpoint and with the addition of two talented new faculty members, Drs. Michael Blute Jr. and Brandon Otto, we have continued to demonstrate impressive growth with a 25% increase in operative volume compared to last year. Our growth in operative cases ranks amongst the top surgical subspecialities within the University of Florida College of Medicine. We have established a multidisciplinary MRI-US Fusion Biopsy Program for prostate cancer detection and active surveillance led by Drs. Tom Stringer and Brandon Otto along with members of the radiology and surgical pathology departments.

Our research activities center around clinical trial recruitment in bladder, kidney and prostate cancers led by Dr. Paul Crispin, who was recently named the lead clinician for the urology disease site within the University of Florida Health Cancer Center. In addition, our NIDDK T32 research fellowship continues to thrive under the mentorship of Dr. Saeed Khan, who is an internationally recognized leader in oxalate metabolism, and Dr. Benjamin Canales, who received the 2016 AUA Gold Cystoscope Award.

From an educational perspective, our residents have continued to represent our department extremely well with awards at local and regional meetings. Two of our current chief residents have secured top fellowships in urologic oncology: Mohit Gupta, MD (Brady Urological Institute at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, MD) and pediatric urology: Anja Zann, MD (Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, OH). We have recently completed our resident applicant interviews, where we were able to showcase the unique attributes of our training program including our diverse fellowship-trained faculty, training techniques and facilities, and our mentorship model for clinical rotations. In October 2016 we expanded our resident clinical exposure by introducing a community-based rotation to enhance our trainees experience and complement our traditional academic-based and VA hospital rotations.

All of these positive activities are directly attributed to the outstanding group of talented, motivated and compassionate faculty, staff, researchers, and residents who make up the UF Health Urology family. What a wonderful time it is to be a UroGator!

I want to thank you all for your continued support of our program and wish you and your loved ones the very best during the upcoming holiday season.

Doximity Survey Info: As you may be aware, it’s the time of year when U.S. News & World Report solicits input from specialists for the Best Hospitals and Best Children’s Hospitals rankings. Our program places high value on these rankings, which are one of many indications of the commitment and excellence provided in urologic care by our team of physicians and providers. In keeping with UF Health’s overarching missions, UF Health Urology remains committed to providing outstanding patient-centered care, conducting innovative research and training tomorrow’s leaders. The rankings include a specialty reputation component. If you have the opportunity to respond to the upcoming reputation survey, and you feel UF Health Shands Hospital and/or UF Health Shands Children’s Hospital is one of the nation’s top hospitals for providing care to adult and/or pediatric urology patients who have challenging urologic conditions, please take the time to vote.

UF Health Shands Hospital tied for top in state in 2016 U.S. News hospital rankings

University of Florida Health Shands Hospital is now tied for top adult hospital in Florida, according to the 2016-2017 U.S. News & World Report adult specialty rankings of the nation’s hospitals, released August 2, 2016. UF Health has been ranked nationally in eight medical specialties, up from seven in the 2015-2016 rankings. Nephrology, tied for 11th, is the highest-ranking UF Health specialty. Also ranked are neurology and neurosurgery (21st), pulmonology (25th), gynecology (29th), geriatrics (33rd), urology (42nd), diabetes and endocrinology (tied for 48th) and cancer (49th). Neurology and neurosurgery jumped to 21st from last year’s 40th place. Of these, UF Health is highest-ranked in Florida in four specialties — gynecology, nephrology, neurology and neurosurgery, and pulmonology. The new hospital rankings and methodology are available at http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals.
Welcome New Faculty

Michael L. Blute Jr, MD

Our team has seen exponential growth in urologic cancer visits in the last several years with the establishment of our multidisciplinary urology cancer program. As such, Dr. Blute joins our team as a fellowship-trained urologic oncologist with both clinical and research excellence and special interest in the treatment of bladder, kidney and testicular cancers. Dr. Blute completed his urology residency at Smith’s Institute of Urology at Long Island Jewish Hospital and then completed a two-year Society of Urologic Oncology fellowship at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine. He comes from an excellent lineage of urologists, following the footsteps of his father and uncle who are both prominent members of the American Urological Association. Dr. Blute intends to be an active member of UF Health Cancer Center by initiating clinical trials and engaging in collaborative research efforts throughout the University of Florida.

Brandon J. Otto, MD

Dr. Otto completed his urologic residency training at my alma mater, New York Presbyterian Hospital-Cornell followed by a one-year advanced fellowship in minimally invasive urologic surgery at the University of Florida. He brings expertise in endoscopic kidney stone surgery as well as laparoscopic and robotic surgical management for prostate and kidney cancer. In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Otto will be involved in image-guided prostate biopsies for prostate cancer detection as well as managing our active surveillance program for patients with low risk prostate cancers. Lastly, he is involved in clinical research in kidney stone disease and prevention, adding to our outstanding faculty in this arena. Dr. Otto will be seeing patients at the urology clinic at the University of Florida Health Medical Plaza and will operate out of both the North and South Tower facilities.

Welcome New Residents

Jeremy Bergamo, from Bradenton, FL, is a University of Florida College of Medicine graduate. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of South Florida in psychology.

Jennifer Kuo, from Tampa, FL, is a University of Florida College of Medicine graduate. She completed her undergraduate studies at UF and majored in finance.

Andrew Rabley, from Irmo, SC, is a graduate from the Medical University of South Carolina. He attended Clemson University where he majored in packaging science.
M. Louis Moy, MD Named Residency Program Director

Dr. Moy joined the University of Florida Department of Urology in July 2009 and currently serves as the director of the female and reconstructive urology program. In July 2016, he was approved by the GMEC to assume the duties of residency program director. The department appreciates the hard work by our former program director, Dr. Vincent Bird, and looks forward to new innovation and leadership provided by Dr. Moy.

Paul L. Crispen, MD Promoted to Associate Professor

Dr. Crispen joined the University of Florida Department of Urology in May 2013. The University of Florida Board of Trustees and the College of Medicine has recently announced the promotion of Paul Crispen, MD, to associate professor of urology. Important factors in granting tenure and promotion include international recognition of scholarship, the quality and impact of teaching and contributions to the University of Florida. His clinical interests and skills are Urologic Oncology (bladder, kidney, testis, penile and adrenal cancers), Adrenalectomy, Renal Cell Carcinoma, Testicular Cancer and Robotic Surgery.

Vincent G. Bird, MD Promoted to Endowed Professor

Dr. Bird joined the University of Florida Department of Urology in July 2010. The University of Florida Board of Trustees and the College of Medicine has recently announced the promotion of Vincent Bird, MD, to professor of urology. Important factors in granting tenure and promotion include international recognition of scholarship, the quality and impact of teaching and contributions to the University of Florida. His clinical interests and skills are: Endourology and Urinary Tract Stone Prevention and Treatment. He has also been awarded the David A. Cofrin Endowed Professorship in Endourology.

Michelle Van Leer, MSN, promoted to Administrator for the Department of Urology

Michelle Van Leer, MSN began her career in health care in 1986 coming back to UF Health in 1995. She has held a variety of positions including nurse manager of outpatient pediatrics as well as business manager of the urology outpatient clinic. Ms. Van Leer graduated from University of Florida College of Nursing where she earned her bachelors and master’s degree in nursing. She has been employed by UF Health since 1995. Michelle is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International, Florida Organization of Nurse Executives, University of Florida College of Nursing Alumni Council as well as an affiliate member of the Florida Prostate Cancer Advisory Council.

Over the past year, Michelle has served as the interim administrator during transition of our department to a new chairman. She was one of 33 applicants who were interviewed for the administrator position. She was chosen because of her unique clinical background, extensive experience and knowledge of departmental operations and her established networking skills within the College of Medicine. She will be responsible for the day to day operations of the entire urology enterprise including clinic, operating room and administrative activities. Please join me in congratulating Michelle on her outstanding work ethic and leadership and being promoted to our department’s administrator.
Congratulations to Dr. Saeed Khan, Adjunct Professor in the Department of Urology at the University of Florida, on receiving three lifetime achievement awards over the last 6 months. In July 2016, Dr. Khan gave an invited presentation as well as organized a mini-seminar at the 13th International Symposium on Urolithiasis in Chiba, Japan. This type of urolithiasis symposia is held once every four years in various locations around the world. At the meeting, he was given an Honorary Award, “In Recognition of His Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to the Field of Urolithiasis Research,” a distinction given previously to only two others in the field. In April 2016, Dr. Khan received the University of Florida, College of Medicine, Lifetime Achievement Award. “In Recognition of An Extraordinary Academic Career of Leadership, Teaching, Research and Discovery. Your dedication and success has brought great honor and recognition to The College of Medicine and the University of Florida.” Finally, in March 2016, Dr. Khan was awarded the “Unbreakable” Lifetime Achievement Award by The American Urological Association, Inc. and the R.O.C.K. Society, “In Recognition of your Devotion to Kidney Stone Disease through Nucleation of Brilliant Crystal Ideas, Growth of your Research Endeavors, Retention for Years within the Kidney Stone Field, and Aggregation of Others with Like Minds…” Throughout his career, Dr. Khan has published more than 400 scholarly articles, including reviews, book chapters and nearly 200 refereed articles. He regularly reviews manuscripts for a number of scholarly journals and is currently an associate editor for the journal Urolithiasis (formerly Urological Research), the official journal of the International Urolithiasis Society. He has also edited a number of proceedings of international symposia on urolithiasis, in addition to a book titled Calcium Oxalate in Biological Systems. Dr. Khan has organized two Finlayson Symposia on Urolithiasis at the University of Florida and had significant involvement in national and international professional associations, serving as: The president of the Florida Society for Microscopy; The president of the R.O.C.K. (Research on Calculus Kinetics) Society (in 1999); and a member of both the advisory boards of International Symposia on Urolithiasis and the European Symposia on Urolithiasis. An experienced speaker, Dr. Khan has also given keynote addresses, plenary and state-of-the-art lectures at conferences and symposia, both at domestic and international meetings across the globe. For his outstanding career accomplishments, Dr. Khan has also received: The University of Florida Research Achievement Award; The University of Florida College of Medicine Faculty Research Prize in Basic Science; and a Research Foundation Professorship. Dr. Khan is currently Director of the Urology Training Grant and co-mentoring two T32 fellows funded by the National Institutes of Health and one Urology Care Foundation Research Scholar funded by the American Urological Association. He also mentored Dr. Benjamin Canales, Associate Professor of Urology who this year received the Gold Cystoscope Award. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Khan!
Dr. Gupta matched into his first fellowship choice and will be the Ralph T. and Esther L. Warburton Foundation and Dr. Hugh Judge Jewett Fellow in Urologic Oncology at the Brady Urological Institute at Johns Hopkins. This is a two-year Society of Urologic Oncology-approved fellowship. This year’s match was particularly competitive, as only 38 out of 59 applicants matched. Congratulations, Dr. Gupta!

Dr. Zann matched into a two-year pediatric urology fellowship at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, OH. Congratulations, Dr. Zann!

Congratulations to Dr. Kevin Campbell for winning the 2016 Junior Surgery Teaching Award while completing his intern year in general surgery! He was voted the best junior general surgery resident teacher by the University of Florida medical students. We look forward to having him in the Department of Urology for the next four years.

On Friday, June 17, 2016, Dr. Romano DeMarco was honored for his gift of $10,000 to the Dixon Walker, MD Pediatric Urology Fund. Since Dr. DeMarco’s arrival at the University of Florida Department of Urology, he has worked tirelessly to provide unique pediatric urologic services to children across the region. As a direct result, the recently released U.S. News & World Report rankings of pediatric programs recognized pediatric urology at UF Health as a top ranked specialty. This gift by Dr. DeMarco will continue the legacy of Pediatric Urology here at the University of Florida.

On June 17, 2016, Luvenia Flowers was awarded the Carole Thephin Excellence in Nursing Award. The Department of Urology established this award in 2015 to recognize excellence in urology nursing care. Dr. Su presented the award to Ms. Flowers, a UF Health employee since 1987, at the 2016 Resident Graduation Banquet. Her commitment, dedication and professionalism sets a standard for all to follow. We look forward to many more years working with her.
The UroGators Alumni Society was established in 2008 and represents all former University of Florida Department of Urology faculty, fellows and residents. **Our stated mission is to enhance fellowship and communication among its members, to support and promote education for residents and members and to advise and support the University of Florida Department of Urology.** As an organization, the UroGators reach out to alumni and friends in urology across the country. One of our annual events is the UroGators reception at the annual American Urological Association Meeting. This past year a fellow AUA board member informed me after our spirited reception, that ours was the most genuine, engaging and enjoyable of all the institutional receptions. Our outreach includes the annual Visiting Professorship in partnership with the Department and extends to a weekend football event and tailgate. Unfortunately, this year’s event was impacted by a hurricane and is already rescheduled for next fall on October 5-8, 2017.

UroGators are part of leadership in organized urology at the state, regional and national level. Our alumni society is recognized, admired and emulated by academic institutions across the country.

**Our successes relate to relationships and comradery within our specialty. The strength of organization relates to our proud heritage and the ongoing relationship with the University of Florida Department of Urology. **

**We welcome all of you to be a vital participant of the UroGators Alumni Society.**

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**UroGators: Leaders in Urology**

**UF Health Urology**

*We are proud to have several of our former trainees currently serving on urology societies at the local, regional and national levels.*

**2016 - 2017**

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*Secretary/Treasurer:* Kevin Ki-Dong Lee, MD

*Executive Committee Member:* Paul Crispin, MD

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*Florida Representative:* Michael A. Dennis, MD

*Florida Representative:* Sijo Parekattil, MD

*Florida Representative:* Rolando Rivera, MD

*Alternate Representative:* Mike Grable, MD

*Kentucky Representative:* Katie Ballert, MD

*Representative to AUA Board of Directors:* Tom Stringer, MD

**American Urological Association**

*Representative Council:* Benjamin Canales, MD

*Chairman, AUA Compensation Committee:* Tom Stringer, MD

*Board of Directors SESAU Representative:* Tom Stringer, MD

*SESUAU Representative AUA Nominating Committee:* Li-Ming Su, MD
In 2004, Courtney Munroe was young, healthy and active.

Munroe, who was in his early 40s at the time, wasn’t exactly someone who you would think was at risk of developing cancer.

But during his routine physical exam, Munroe’s doctor recommended a check for prostate cancer.

“My doctor said, ‘You’re over 40, you’re black and the incidence for prostate cancer for black men over 40 is high,’” said Munroe, who was born in Guyana. “They did a PSA check, and it came back elevated.”

The PSA, or prostate-specific antigen, test looks for elevated levels of a protein produced by the prostate which may be caused by enlargement, inflammation or cancer. Munroe’s results led to a prostate biopsy, which showed he had a moderately aggressive prostate cancer.

“The cancer was really advanced, and I was just lucky to have found it in time,” said Munroe, who is the father of three children and lives in Coral Springs, Florida. “Usually, you do have symptoms, so it’s strange that I didn’t.”

Munroe, the vice president of a global information technology firm, is familiar with researching the best solutions to problems, and found that surgery using a robotic system to remove his cancerous prostate might have fewer side effects than traditional open surgery.

Through his search, Munroe found Li-Ming Su, M.D., now the David A. Cofrin professor and chair of the University of Florida College of Medicine’s department of urology, who was then the director of robotic urologic surgery at The Johns Hopkins Brady Urological Institute in Baltimore.

“I spoke to a few doctors before I saw him, and when I met him, he just blew me away,” Munroe said. “He was so personable. He didn’t make any promises or guarantees — he was just very confident.”

Su and Munroe decided to proceed with the robotic prostate surgery, a type of laparoscopic or “keyhole” surgery in which miniature instruments are used to delicately dissect and remove the prostate and surrounding lymph nodes without making a large abdominal incision. The surgeon, seated at a workstation a few feet away, meticulously controls the robotic instruments in real time, much like having his or her own miniature hands in the abdomen — but hands that measure only 8 millimeters.

Su’s confidence bore out. Munroe recovered quickly from his surgery, which had minimal impact on his urinary and sexual function.

Munroe’s PSA tests also demonstrated that he was cured of prostate cancer. But nearly 10 years later, in 2013, an annual test showed microscopic traces of blood in Munroe’s urine.

“I did an MRI, and that’s when they found the lump on my kidney,” Munroe said.
Courtney Munroe continued

He was soon diagnosed with kidney cancer — a rarity for someone of his age who had no family history of kidney cancer.

“Lightning struck twice with me,” Munroe said.

For the second time, Munroe sought an appointment with Su — who, by this time, was working at UF Health. The two discussed Munroe’s second surgery, which was centered around a 7-centimeter tumor on Munroe’s left kidney. The tumor was larger than masses Su typically removes using robotic surgery, which measure about 4 centimeters or less. But because of the tumor’s location, Su was confident that he would be able to remove the mass and spare the healthy portions of the kidney, a procedure called robotic partial nephrectomy.

“Historically, a lot of kidney tumors were removed through a 12-inch open flank incision that can be very invasive, and can require the removal of a part of the patient’s rib to access the kidney,” Su said. “It’s a difficult surgery to recover from.”

Munroe decided to proceed with robotic surgery, and Su was able to preserve 70 percent of Munroe’s left kidney as well as his overall kidney function.

“I was back to work within two weeks, and on a plane three weeks after the surgery for a business trip,” Munroe said.

Now free from both prostate and kidney cancer, Munroe returns to UF Health only for an annual screening regimen.

“Courtney was a very intelligent patient. He was looking for a cutting-edge treatment that would allow for him to achieve a cure, but also to recover and get back to his active lifestyle sooner,” Su said. “He was an incredibly motivated person, grabbing the bull by the horns and promptly addressing his two separate cancers.”

For Munroe? That meant he could get back to normal.

“Now I’m back to doing everything I did before, everything from scuba diving to motorcycling to running a few times a week,” Munroe said. “I am able to live a very normal life.”

Photos of Courtney Monroe enjoying life thanks to Dr. Li-Ming Su!
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Meet Our Team
Visit urology.ufl.edu and go to ‘Meet Our Team’ and click on the categories below to see our newest members. To learn more about our department, visit our website urology.ufl.edu.
Dr. Benjamin K. Canales, Associate Professor of Urology, was the 2016 recipient of the American Urological Association (AUA) Gold Cystoscope Award. Presented at the association’s annual meeting in San Diego, this prestigious award has been given annually since 1977 to one urologist in the U.S. distinguished by outstanding contributions to the profession within ten years of completing residency training.

Dr. Canales received the award of excellence for quality publications in the field of laparoscopy and endourology for his pursuit of transformative research in kidney stone disease. “This award underscores Dr. Canales’ commitment to research in the field of nephrolithiasis,” said Dr. Li-Ming Su, University of Florida Department of Urology Chairman. “Benji is a caring physician, an outstanding surgeon-scientist, and a proven researcher making a difference in urologic patients every day.”

Dr. Canales, who joined the University of Florida faculty in 2007 after completing a minimally-invasive surgical fellowship, said he was both “grateful and humbled” to be honored by his colleagues and peers. “The previous recipients of this award are considered giants in the field of urology, and it is truly an honor to just be considered in this group,” Canales said. “The award really serves as a reflection of the amazing colleagues I’ve collaborated with over the years and who continue to guide and direct me. It also provides me with a platform to thank my family, teachers, mentors who have loved and encouraged me as well as the institutions that have fostered and supported my work, including the University of Florida. I feel more motivated than ever to make a difference and find areas where I can move the field of urology forward.”

An expert in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of kidney stones, Dr. Canales has an active research laboratory and has authored a number of scientific papers, abstracts and book chapters. With over 1,000 literature citations and $1.3 million in grant support, Canales’ work includes the development of a new scientific technique to identify the proteins that make urinary crystals “stick” together, a new animal model to explore oxalate transport in the GI tract, and the development of patient-oriented products to self-monitor and prevent kidney stones. Dr. Canales is also a founding member of the Department’s T32 program, one of only six NIH-sponsored urology training programs across the country. Focusing on stone disease, Canales mentors a number of T32 post-doctoral fellows and junior faculty as they investigate the role of the immune system on stone formation and the role of bacteria in solute transport from the gut.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Canales for this recognition and his achievements for the University of Florida Department of Urology. Benjamin K. Canales, MD, recipient of the 2016 American Urological Association (AUA) Gold Cystoscope Award.

In addition to a cash award, he received a gold-plated cystoscope at the annual AUA meeting this past May in San Diego. Dr. Canales was selected for this honor on the basis of his exemplary research initiatives in the pathogenesis of nephrolithiasis, which include the development of new animal models and the exploration for novel therapeutic approaches. Please congratulate Dr. Canales for this recognition and achievement.
The University of Florida & the UroGators Alumni Society
10th Annual Alumni Society AUA Reception
(held in conjunction with the 2017 American Urological Association Meeting)

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UroGators Update

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