Dear Colleagues:

I am asking you to take a few minutes to stop and consider the value of the expertise and commitment you and the entire field of vascular surgery has on the wellbeing of people around the world. When we are overwhelmed by our daily grind of too many patients, too few resources, too little sleep, and just too much pressure, I think we tend to lose sight of our critical role in the lives of real people throughout the world.

Without our skills, many would not be living; many would not be able to enjoy their activities long into their retirement; and many families of our patients would be mourning the loss of their loved ones and/or be burdened with care giving to family members who lost a limb.

I am asking you to consider your personal role in the overall lives of our patients because I want you to understand how vital our philanthropic arm, the SVS Foundation, plays in our ability to have helped thousands during the past nearly 70 years. Visionaries, like Dr. Michael DeBakey, established and supported the Foundation because they knew those of us doing the research need support. They understood the specialty could not stand still. We must keep moving forward with innovations in both surgical and clinical procedures.

I have long supported the Foundation and am proud to serve as this year’s chair. I encourage you to start or continue with your donations now. Those who have contributed $10,000 or more throughout their lifetimes are part of the SVS Foundation Legacy Program. They have led the specialty to ensure funds are available to develop the brightest vascular researchers within our ranks. Grants funded by the SVS Foundation are primarily presented to vascular surgeons beginning their careers who have expressed interest and talent in research. With our support, these innovators are able to secure the significant governmental funding needed.

The work of all vascular surgeons depends upon constant advancements. I know you understand this, but most of you do not support the Foundation. Please understand that the SVS Foundation exclusively supports vascular surgery. It is our foundation for our specialty.

The 2015 SVS Annual Appeal is underway and in need of your contributions. This is your chance to make a significant difference in our future. Together we will secure our status as the most innovative medical specialty in all of medicine. Even after we have retired, our donations now will still be working through the creativity of the innovative researchers we support.

You may make your SVS Foundation donation at SVSFoundationSite.org or use the contribution form in this annual report. Don’t let vascular surgery down; it is important you join us in donating to ensure our future.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Peter F. Lawrence, MD
Chair, 2015 SVS Foundation
SVS Strategic Goal Number 5: The SVS will foster research and innovation with scientific integrity to optimize vascular health. Approved in May 2013, the Strategic Plan includes six main goals. Leadership committed SVS resources to areas determined to be integral to the future of the vascular surgery specialty. Research is one of the six. Leadership in vascular research is critical to developing better treatments for our patients, and maintaining a prominent role for our specialty in defining vascular care. Your support is required to continue funding Foundation research awards to achieve this goal.

SVS Foundation’s Return on Investment

One objective for this SVS strategic goal is: Identify the NIH-sponsored career development awards as the SVS Foundation’s top priority.

Identifying talented young surgeon-scientists and supporting them at the critical early stages of their career is the first priority for maintaining a research pipeline. Once a surgical investigator is awarded a coveted NIH Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award (K08) or a Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award (K23), the challenge of balancing clinical duties and research efforts begins. The Foundation’s awards supplement their protected time to make it financially feasible for the vascular surgeon and their institution to conduct the research. As of 2013, the Foundation committed $8,850,000 to 23 K08 and six K23 award recipients. The return on investment for these individuals has been outstanding. By 2013, NIH awarded additional funding of $39,652,625 to many of these K-award winners for subsequent R01, M01, F32, F05, and R21 grants. This represents a 4.5-fold return on investment in NIH dollars alone for the SVS Foundation’s K Awardees. In addition, many of these individuals also obtained VA, other non-profit foundation, and industry support for their research.

Pipeline for Vascular Surgeon Leaders

Of the 29 K08 and K23 awardees in 2013, eight were heads of departments or divisions. Many others are nationally and internationally recognized leaders in our specialty. The Foundation’s commitment to the K award program must continue to maintain the pipeline of vascular surgeon investigators and develop our future leaders. Without this support, it will be even more difficult for vascular surgeons interested in research to develop their careers. From my personal perspective, my K08 award led directly to where I am today, leading me into a productive career in translational research and clinical trials seeking new treatment approaches for vascular patients.

Just as important as the funding is the invaluable mentoring experience that accrues to these individuals. Because the K-Award mentors are often past awardees themselves, they recognize how their mentees will have positive influences on the SVS and the practice of vascular health care. Awardees move up within the specialty, and as they do, they become the mentors of the next generation. Second generation K award mentors in the SVS program are just now beginning their new leadership roles.
Quality Patient Care

A second objective of the research and innovation goal is: Make tangible progress toward accomplishing the top three identified clinical research goals set by the SVS (asymptomatic carotid disease, claudication, critical limb ischemia).

Patients reap the ultimate benefit from our work with the SVS Foundation and the research grants that result. As we learn more from the research, we share our findings with the entire vascular surgery specialty to use in their practices. In looking at the portfolio of research activity supported by the Foundation, it is apparent that vascular surgeons are conducting innovative studies across the breadth of clinical problems we encounter in everyday practice. The unique role of the surgeon-scientist, bringing observations directly from the bedside and the operating room to the scientific arena, insures that clinically meaningful questions are being vigorously pursued. This is in the best interest of our patients and consistent with our overall vision—to eliminate death and disability from vascular disease.

Keep Vascular Surgery at the Forefront for National Funding

A third objective of the strategic goal is: Promote career development for young researchers through funding, partnerships, and educational programs.

SVS leads with its strategic partnerships. The economic climate for biomedical research funding is historically grim, and thus it has never been more critical to have a strong advocacy effort. As a direct result of our prior investments, vascular surgeons are at the table with federal and other non-profit foundations. For example, several former K-Awardees (including myself) sit on NIH study sections. SVS and the entire vascular surgery specialty have a productive relationship with NIH because we’ve seeded our research efforts with the Foundation’s funding. We’ve been able to continue to promote the importance of vascular research with NIH and other funding entities, and as we become more prominent with the impact of our work, we are able to influence the agenda and leverage the interests of our specialty — and our patients.

It is Your Professional Obligation to Support Your SVS Foundation

SVS Foundation provides funding only to vascular surgeons. Other foundations you may support probably fund biomedical research for other purposes, but your support of the SVS Foundation is a lifeline for the future of our specialty.

Our Strategic Plan is very specific in its commitment to vascular surgery research. However, our membership has not shown broad support for that commitment. Of the 4,847 members in 2013, less than 1 percent (240 members, and two vascular divisions) made contributions in the 2013 Annual Appeal and 151 continued to fulfill their Open the Pathway commitment. These individual donations total only 19 percent of the Foundation’s total income.

I am appealing to you, our members, to get behind this effort. As noted, our research develops future leaders and contributes to the entire specialty’s prestige. Our patients rely on our expertise to develop new technology and improvements for their vascular health. As a specialty, we must support the SVS Foundation to ensure we remain viable in this every-changing health care climate. I am asking you to make your Foundation Annual Appeal contribution.

Dr. Michael S. Conte, Chair, SVS Research Council (November 2013)
Teri and I decided to support the SVS Foundation because continued innovation and improvement of vascular surgery have been central foci of our professional lives.

Teri and I met in “Old Main,” the University of Michigan’s hospital in 1979. Since then, we have been caring for patients with vascular disease together as my career progressed from resident, to fellow, and, finally, to attending. Teri has been a nurse, physician’s assistant, vascular lab tech, and nurse clinician.

Throughout these years, we have benefited directly and indirectly from SVS’ support for research and education. Directly we have profited by regularly reading the Journal of Vascular Surgery and by attendance at most regional and national vascular meetings. Indirectly, many of our medical students, residents, fellows, and partners have been supported at some times and in some ways by the SVS and its Foundation.

The goals of the SVS and the Foundation are as important as ever even as the science and technology have become more complex, and funding sources ever more tightly stretched. It seemed only logical and appropriate that we return, in kind, some small part of the support and benefits we have garnered from the SVS and its Foundation. People who provide great insights and scientific advances need “shoulders to stand on.” We felt it our privilege and responsibility to help support those “shoulders”: the SVS Foundation.

Dr. Daniel Walsh and Teri Walsh, RN, SVS Foundation Legacy Contributors, Director’s Circle
“Without the Support of the SVS Foundation, I Would Have No Story to Tell”

The SVS Foundation, in conjunction with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) support young vascular surgeon/scientists through the Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award. This mechanism has proven to be a critical method through which the SVS and the SVS Foundation invest in basic, translational, and clinical research.

I am fortunate to have been the recipient of this award. It proved to be essential because it gave me the protected time I needed to follow a curriculum for professional development and the time to test hypotheses in the lab. I began with a series of graduate level courses that focused on molecular mechanisms and measurement techniques, host defenses, and ethical aspects of research. I attended a two-week development program at Harvard School of Public Health. This development class was a unique opportunity for me to develop administrative skills that will allow me to run a laboratory.

I honed my basic science skills with courses that focused on specific techniques: microarray analysis, FACS analysis, and immunohistochemistry. The knowledge I gained was directly applied to my ongoing research and resulted in presentations at the SVS Research Initiatives, the ATVB, the Vascular Annual Meeting, ACS, and the Association of Academic Surgeons (AAS). Importantly, these abstracts then progressed to a total of 27 articles in journals such as: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Gene Therapy, PLOS ONE, Annals of Vascular Surgery, and the Journal of Surgical Research.

These accomplishments are directly attributable to the SVS Foundation Career Award and have advanced my career as a surgeon-scientist: I am currently an Associate Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Section of Vascular Surgery.

I think more important to my career development, this award has provided intangible gains that are subtle and allow me to address the challenges of translational science in a direct manner. During my award, I formed a company with a mission to improve clinical outcomes for patients undergoing cardiovascular surgery by using a novel, ex vivo approach employing therapeutic viruses that prevent pathologic vein graft failure due to restenosis. As part of this process I interviewed vascular surgeons, pharmaceutical companies (specifically the team that led the Project of Ex-vivo Vein Graft Engineering via Transfection (PREVENT trials), Venture Capital firms, and Contract Research Organizations to pitch the idea and learn the barriers to clinical development in the post PREVENT era. The lessons learned through this process have been vital to development of the research, but don’t show up on a CV. I have scrutinized the opinions of those we interviewed about why the PREVENT trials failed and I have learned a great deal.

With the work done from my K award and real world lessons learned from the PREVENT trials, I have recently submitted an R-01 proposal to the NIH. The goal of my proposal is to address barriers to clinical development and move the research agent into a phase one clinical trial. Although I don’t have a response from the NIH yet, this is a story in evolution. Without the support of the SVS Foundation, there would be no story to tell.

Dr. Christopher Skelly

Awardee Stories

“Without the Support of the SVS Foundation, I Would Have No Story to Tell”

Dr. Christopher Skelly
K08 Awardee
(2009 - 2014)
In 2012 I received notification that my application for a mentored clinical scientist development award from the NIH would be funded, and that the grant would be supplemented by the SVS Foundation’s matching program. As an aspiring surgeon-scientist with a strong interest in how basic science research can be applied to the management of human disease, this moment was transformative.

As a result of this funding, our group has made important strides in understanding how innate immunity may play a role in promoting angiogenesis, and how these pathways may be modulated to help patients with peripheral arterial disease.

The support from the SVS Foundation helps build strong research programs in a time where funding is limited, and the cost of protected time comes at a premium. As a surgical society, the SVS is fairly unique in its unfailing commitment to continue to support research endeavors that are innovative and replete with translational potential.

The SVS Foundation awards help to build the careers of the individuals they support, as well as those who make up the next generation of academic vascular surgeons. As a result of my award, I have been able to recruit medical students to become engaged in our research program, which, in turn, provided opportunities for them to present nationally, publish their work, and meet potential collaborators. Thus, the SVS Foundation awards deliver the means to help develop and propagate ideas.

However, the most important contribution of these awards is their ability to allow surgeon-scientists to practically move research programs forward in a way that will benefit patients. Many awardees, to date, have made important contributions to translational vascular research as a direct result of early funding by the SVS Foundation. I hope to join the ranks of these individuals who recognize that the most important contribution of this funding is its ability to improve patient care.

Dr. Ulka Sachdev
Drs. Phil Goodney and Alik Farber were awarded a Multicenter Clinical Studies Planning Grant in 2014. The following is their progress report as of May 26, 2015.

Called the Vascular Physician Offer and Report (VAPOR Trial), the goal of their proposal was to perform a pilot, feasibility study comparing different methods of offering smoking cessation support to patients facing vascular interventions. The long-term goal was to use this pilot data to support a larger trial application for support from federal funding sources. There are three important ways the study is on track:

First, since September 1, 2014, 155 patients have been enrolled into the pilot trial across the eight sites that committed to participate in this study. At half of the sites, patients receive usual care for smoking cessation. At the other half of the sites, patients receive a specific, evidence-based protocol for smoking cessation. Several manuscripts are in evolution to report what the team has learned thus far, including:

- Characteristics of patients enrolled in a national cluster randomized trial of smoking cessation interventions for patients with vascular disease.
- Domains described by patients and stakeholders considering smoking cessation around the time of vascular interventions.
- A cluster randomized trial of smoking cessation interventions for patients with severe vascular disease: preliminary findings.

Second, a large, multidisciplinary study team has been assembled – including Dr. Andrew Hoel at Northwestern, Dr. Andres Schanzer at UMass, Dr. Tze-Woei Tan at LSU-Shreveport, Dr. Ben Brooke at the University of Utah, and Dr. Jeb Hallet at Roper/St.Francis in South Carolina. This team prepared to submit an application for funding of a large clinical trial comparing different strategies to help with perioperative smoking cessation for patients with severe peripheral arterial disease. It includes national and international experts in smoking cessation, risk communication, decision support, physician training, epidemiology, biostatistics, clinical trials, and vascular risk assessment.

Third, an application was submitted for a Large Pragmatic Study to the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute. The application compares two different approaches for smoking cessation in patients with vascular disease and includes multiple stakeholders. The planned trial, with a total budget of $12 million, will be the largest and most definitive examination of different smoking cessation strategies and high-risk patients facing vascular interventions. As part of preparing this application, the VAPOR team has worked extensively to engage patients, stakeholders, physicians, and health system leaders in support of the interviews and focus groups, soliciting feedback from more than 120 patient participants and planning for this large pragmatic trial.
A diverse family of supporters: individuals, societies, foundations, and corporations enable the SVS Foundation to fulfill its mission to support career development for today’s best and brightest young vascular surgeon scientists. This Annual Report includes articles written by awardees explaining the value of the SVS Foundation’s support.

What can you do today to ensure that important commitment is stable, strong, and effective tomorrow? Giving opportunities that benefit both donor and beneficiary can be found in many planned and deferred giving options, which are available to all SVS members.

To date, a small, but extremely generous, number of members have made significant, unrestricted gifts via bequest or other instrument. Planned giving is a strategy that helps donors maximize the personal benefits of charitable giving, enabling them to integrate generosity with tax planning to attain mutually beneficial goals.

Vascular surgeons are leaders in philanthropy that furthers passion for excellence in surgical science that, in turn, educates our clinicians and improves the care of patients. In 2015, the Foundation polled its members ages 60 and over to request they share information (in confidence) regarding a designation to the SVS Foundation. This information is needed so that the Foundation positions itself properly in making decisions relative to the provision of research awards. The responses have been enormously helpful towards that goal.

Members interested in learning more about planned giving may contact Patricia Burton at 312-334-2303 or visit www.SVSFoundationsite.org. Always confer with your financial planner and/or tax attorney when considering a major or planned gift.
SVS Foundation Award Winners 2015

EJ Wylie Traveling Fellowship
Neal R. Barshes, MD, MPH
Baylor College of Medicine

Clinical Research Seed Grant
Mark F. Conrad, MD, MMSc
Massachusetts General Hospital
Project Title: Noninvasive Assessment of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Wall Structural Integrity and Inflammation as Predictors of Rupture

Rishi Kundi, MD
University of Maryland School of Medicine
Project Title: Functional benefit of exercise therapy after endovascular intervention in older patients with peripheral arterial disease

Mohamed Zayed, MD, PhD
Washington University in St. Louis
Project Title: The Lipid Micro-Environment in Atherosclerotic Carotid Artery Plaques in Diabetic Patients

Student Research Fellowship Award
Christopher O. Audu, PhD
Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth
Sponsor: Eva Rzucidlo, MD
Project title: Mitigating Intimal Hyperplasia by the Intracellular Modulation of Endothelin Hormone Receptors in Endothelial and Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells

Denise Kimbrough, PhD
Medical University of South Carolina
Sponsor: Jean Ruddy, MD
Project title: Disparate hypertension-induced gene expression of matrix remodeling proteases in thoracic versus abdominal aorta

Katelyn Koons
Johns Hopkins University
Sponsor: Benjamin Jackson, MD (Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania)
Project title: Turbulence in carotid stenosis by duplex ultrasound imaging

Travis R. Ladner, BA
Vanderbilt University
Sponsor: Colleen Brophy, MD
Project title: Antagomir 320 as a therapy for vasospasm via heat shock protein modulation

Ghee Rye Lee
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
Sponsor: Edith Tzeng, MD
Project title: The role of the cholinergic anti-inflammatory pathway in carbon monoxide mediated vasoprotection

Jonathan Lee, BS
SUNY Upstate Medical University
Sponsor: Vivian Gahtan, MD
Project title: Effects of COMP on gene expression and protein synthesis in human vascular smooth muscle cells
### Student Research Fellowship Award, cont’d.

**Jennifer Li, BA**  
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai  
Sponsor: Peter Faries, MD  
Project title: *Microembolic Risk of Carotid Artery Plaque Composition by MRI at the Time of Elective Revascularization*

**Sneha Raju, BSc**  
University of Toronto  
Sponsor: Graham Roche-Nagle, MD  
Project title: *Vascular Access Complications Post TAVI*

**Bernard E. Shalit**  
University of Florida  
Sponsor: Scott Berceli, MD  
Project title: *The Role of MCP-1/CCR2 Axis in Aortic Aneurysm Formation Driven by TGF-β Signaling Disorders*

**Kanwar Thind**  
University of Washington  
Sponsor: Gale Tang, MD  
Project title: *Role of MMP2 in p27 Knockout Vascular Smooth Muscle Cell Migration*

**Sanjit S. Uppal, BA, BS**  
University of Washington  
Sponsor: Thomas Hatsukami, MD  
Project title: *Effect of hypoxia on p27 knockout vascular smooth muscle cell phenotypes*

**Yin Zhao, BS**  
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
Sponsor: Rabih Chaer, MD  
Project title: *Circulating microRNAs as Novel Biomarkers for Unstable Carotid Plaque in Patients with Asymptomatic Carotid Stenosis*

### Awards Funded by the SVS Foundation

- Multicenter Clinical Studies Planning Grant
- Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award (K-08)
- Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award (K-23)
- E J Wylie Traveling Fellowship
- Clinical Research Seed Grants
- Co-Sponsored Vascular Cures Wylie Scholar Program
- Resident Research Prize
- Student Research Fellowship
- Vascular Research Initiatives Conference Travel Resident Scholarships

**Mirnal Chaudhary, MD**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Abstract title: *TGF-β/Smad3 promotes Smooth Muscle Cell De-differentiation and Proliferation through crosstalk with the Wnt/β-Catenin Pathway*

**Bian Wu, MD**  
University of California-San Francisco  
Abstract title: *A Biodegradable Wrap for Peri-vascular Delivery of Pro-resolving Lipid Mediators*

**Jie Xie, MD, PhD**  
Indiana University School of Medicine  
Abstract title: *Adipose Stromal Cells Mitigate Excessive Aortic Inflammation and Aortic Aneurysm Expansion through Paracrine Factors in an Elastase-induced Murine Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Model*
The following are individuals who donated between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015

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MVSS Moves up to Chairman’s Circle in Legacy Program

The Midwestern Vascular Surgical Society (MVSS) completed its pledge of $50,000 to the SVS Foundation. MVSS and its members have pledged an additional $50,000, making their total $100,000 when this second pledge is fulfilled. To date (September 2015) MVSS has made the largest contribution to SVS Foundation as a society.

“MVSS understands that vascular scientists need the support of their specialty to secure critical funding from governmental agencies,” said Melina Kibbe, past MVSS president and member of the SVS Foundation Development Committee. “SVS Foundation serves as the specialty’s portal to manage the fundraising for awards presented to deserving researchers.”

Outstanding Support from Vascular Societies


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- Midwestern Vascular Surgical Society

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- Society for Clinical Vascular Surgery
- Western Vascular Society

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- Southern Association of Vascular Surgery

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SVS Thanks all SVS Foundation Donors

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SVS Foundation FY 2015, March 2015

SVS Foundation Total Income

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