

Faculty Teaching Award

This past year Marc Richard was honored with the Bassett teaching award. Each year the Bassett teaching award is given to the attending whom the chief class feels has had the greatest impact on resident training. Considering the sheer number of gifted surgeons that exist in the orthopaedic department at Duke, should signify just how special of an honor this award really is for Dr Richard to receive.

The chief class started our residency 5 years ago. At the same time, we were starting our training, Dr Richard was beginning his career as an orthopaedic attending at Duke University. He had just completed his hand and upper extremity fellowship at Duke, and luckily for us, he made the decision to stay on as a faculty member here. From the first day of his practice, he has been an incredible resource for all of us, and has been so integral in our training.

I can remember the first time I had an encounter with this attending. I was an intern working in the emergency room and had just examined a patient with a wrist fracture. As I rehearsed my presentation and called him expecting him to be upset with me for interrupting him during a busy clinic, he calmly answered the phone and listened patiently as I told him about the patient. Not only did he listen, he also went on to take the next 15 minutes to teach me all sorts of valuable learning points about the patient's injury and treatment plan right over the phone. He ended the conversation saying 'Great job. Call me anytime.' Every one of my co-chiefs has had similar experiences starting with their first encounters with Dr Richard. He has been the most patient and approachable educator for all of us over the past 5 years.

When you ask the nurses or patients about Dr Richard, he is known to them as the doctor who always smiles. Even when it is a holiday, and when he comes in to the hospital to spend countless hours attempting to replant a patient's hand in the wee hours of the morning, he comes in smiling and sits down with the goal to teach. He is always in a positive mood. He always puts resident education as the number one priority of his job.

Dr Richard is the attending you can ask any orthopaedic question to, no matter how basic. Instead of making you feel silly for asking, he makes you feel smarter than you really are. Even when he is not on call, he constantly is answering cell phone calls from both residents and former fellows regarding patient care issues and cases.

Dr Richard comes to so many educational conferences, even when they aren't hand or upper extremity focused. He consistently shows up on Monday mornings at our trauma board at 6 AM, despite the fact that he has a clinic all the way across town. He comes to our Thursday morning conferences, and is at Wednesday night anatomical dissections and grand rounds. Of course, he is at the hand conferences each week as well on both Tuesday and Friday mornings. He does all of this purely by choice, in order to educate residents. He has constantly been there for all of us.

From a personal note, this attending has left such an impact on me, that he inspired me to go into hand and upper extremity surgery. He has also been a huge influence on why I stayed at Duke for fellowship. For this, I am forever grateful. In fact, in the past year's chief class, 3 of 8 chiefs have chosen to go into hand, which I feel is due in large part to his influence and teaching. Not only do I consider him a great attending, I consider him a role model and a friend.

On the Duke website, you will find a short biography on this very humble surgeon, where he indicates that when it comes to patient care, he tries to treat each patient the way he treats his own family. Having had him take care of not only my neighbor and my personal family members, I know that this statement is very true.

It was a great honor for the chief class of 2012 to present the Bassett teaching award to Dr Marc Richard. We hope this award can express to him a fraction of the respect and appreciation we all have for him. Dr Richard is not only an incredible surgeon and educator but also a tremendous person.

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