



SUMMER 2024

NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY MOMENTS

News and Updates from the University of Washington
Department of Neurological Surgery

Message from the Chair

RICHARD G. ELLENBOGEN, MD

Welcome to first edition of Neurological Surgery Moments. With this new publication, our goal is to more rapidly and effectively communicate with our colleagues, stakeholders, and advocates about new developments in the Department. Neurological Surgery Moments will be produced in a more timely, digestible format to keep you abreast of the evolution of the clinical, research, educational and family aspects of the department. We aim to be informative, concise, and fun. In this edition, we will introduce you to our four new neurological surgery residents and a newly recruited renowned faculty member, share the happy news of a new baby and spotlight the research accomplishments of one of our current residents.



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MEET OUR NEW RESIDENTS

[Keanu Chee](#)

Keanu, a native Hawaiian born and raised in Kailua, Hawai'i on the island of O'ahu, received his B.S. in Kinesiology and minor in chemistry from Oregon State University in 2017 and matriculated to the University of Colorado School of Medicine in 2019. Keanu was selected for the University of Colorado School of Medicine Scholar's Year fellowship where he conducted a full year of research under the mentorship of Dr. Todd Hankinson and Dr. Daniel Kramer. In Dr. Hankinson's lab, Keanu studied the rare pediatric brain tumor, Adamantinomatous Craniopharyngioma, as well as the role of cancer-associated fibroblasts in craniopharyngioma pathogenesis. In Dr. Kramer's lab, Keanu investigated the role of the piriform cortex in temporal lobe epilepsy. Outside of the hospital, Keanu enjoys long distance running, watching sports, playing the guitar, cooking, and spending time with his wife.



[Margot Kelly-Hedrick](#)

Margot was born in Seattle, WA. She majored in Psychology at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She received a Master of Bioethics from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics. She completed her MD at Duke University in Durham, NC. During medical school, Margot also completed a fellowship in clinical ethics through Duke's Trent Center for Bioethics, Humanities, and History of Medicine. Her research includes topics in bioethics, medical education, and neurotrauma. Margot enjoys running, gardening, and spending time outside in the beautiful PNW.

To save a life
is a noble
calling, but to
restore a life
is a
miraculous
one.

HARVEY CUSHING





MEET OUR NEW RESIDENTS (Cont'd)

Samantha Sadler

Sam was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. She then attended Duke University, graduating with a B.S. in neuroscience and global health ('19). Alongside Dr. Michael Haglund and the Duke Global Neurosurgery & Neurology research group, she worked on-site with local neurosurgery staff at Mulago National Referral Hospital (MNRH) in Uganda to tackle high infection rates. Sam then went on to obtain her MD at Harvard Medical School ('24), where she continued to pursue global neurosurgery. Under the mentorship of Dr. Alexandra Golby, she participated in the development and validation of an early-stage, low-cost neuronavigation system for low-resource settings, called "NousNav." Outside of neurosurgery, Sam passionately advocates for the representation, inclusion, and equitable treatment of medical trainees who live with chronic illness, health conditions, or disability. Her spare time is spent wine tasting, indoor cycling, and exploring local art museums.



Kevin Vanent

Kevin was born in Renton, WA and raised throughout southern King County. He attended Brown University for college where he graduated magna cum laude with a BSc in Neuroscience. Prior to medical school, he studied how common genetic variants influence the risk and outcome of cerebrovascular disease as a research associate at the Yale School of Medicine. He continued this research when he returned home to complete his medical training at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM). As a medical student, he was committed to advancing medical education and worked to improve the learning experience of his peers. He co-led the student effort to establish the medical education pathway and worked with UWSOM faculty to design new electives for those interested in learning about pedagogy in medicine. In his spare time, he enjoys mountaineering, photography, and exploring the PNW.

NEW BABY

Assistant Professor Patrick and his wife Cassandra Fillingham welcomed Charlotte Tovia Fillingham into the world at 1:54am on May 29th. Charlotte weighed 6lbs 13oz and was 19.5" long at birth. Congratulations!





MEET DEDRA BUCHWALD, MD

It is a great pleasure to welcome an academic icon and longtime UW faculty member to our department, Dr. Dedra Buchwald. Dedra Buchwald, MD was born in Detroit to parents who immigrated from Germany. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in neurobiology and her medical degree at the University of California, San Diego. She then completed her internship and medical residency at the North Carolina Memorial Hospital and Duke University Medical Center. Dr. Buchwald then became a Henry J. Kaiser Fellow in general internal medicine at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital.



Following her fellowship, Dr. Buchwald served as a faculty member at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) and the UW School of Public Health for 29 years. She has dedicated much of her life's work to improving the health of underserved populations. During her tenure at UW, she directed and cared for patients in the International Clinic and created Partnerships for Native Health. As the director of this program, Dr. Buchwald helped conduct one of the largest alcohol addiction-treatment trials among American Indian and Alaska Native adults, the HONOR Project (Helping Our Natives' Ongoing Recovery). She also oversaw the Regional Native American Community Networks Program to address cancer-related disparities among American Indians and Alaska Natives. Beyond this, Dr. Buchwald also directed the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Cooperative Research Center where she conducted studies with twins using the Department of Licensing identification system.

Prior to joining our department, Dr. Buchwald held a joint appointment as Professor of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health and Professor of Medicine at UWSOM where she led the development of programs of research that span a wide range of topics, including physical and mental health, addiction, health services, and social issues in Native communities. She now conducts research and interventions that target population health disparities and the social determinants of health, particularly among American Indians, Alaska Natives and Pacific Islanders. She has worked with over 150 partners including tribes, urban and rural Indian Health programs, nonprofits and health departments.

To date, Dr. Buchwald has been awarded over 79 grants totaling more than 100 million dollars from the NIH and other extramural funding sponsors and has published more than 500 peer-reviewed articles. She is most proud of mentoring more than 50 junior faculty members from underrepresented groups through her leadership role in 7 different training programs. Many of her mentees have gone on to highly productive academic, and clinical careers.

Dr. Buchwald joins us as Professor of Neurological Surgery and will be working with UW Medicine Neurosciences Institute faculty, residents and students. She will continue her investigations into health care disparities and social determinants of health as they are related to neurological conditions. She is an amazing intellect, an insightful mentor, superb educator and dedicated friend. Please join me in welcoming Professor Buchwald to our department.



Resident MALIA McAVOY, MD receives an impressive four awards!

Congratulations to Malia McAvoy (R-5) who is the recipient of several exciting awards for her project “A Novel Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor Coated Flow Diverting Stent as a Drug Delivery System for Intracranial Aneurysms,” the aim of which is to develop a novel coating for a device that addresses both the pathogenesis of aneurysm formation as well as aneurysm occlusion.

- \$25K TAAF Cerebrovascular Research Grant. Of note, Dina Chon, the Executive Director of The Aneurysm and AVM Foundation, had this to say: “Not only is the project fabulously interesting (especially to this layman), but Dr. McAvoy is one of only two researchers who scored a 5 out of 5 points from the committee. 5's are very rare--hence the debate can take into the weekend---but she made the decision super easy. Well done mentors and colleagues, too; we are very excited.”
- \$40K 2024-25 NREF Research Fellowship Grant/Young Clinician Investigator Award. Dr. McAvoy is only the 2nd resident in our program to receive this funding.
- \$100K NIH R25 Grant

Further, Dr. McAvoy is the recipient of a Year 1 SNS Neurosurgeon-Scientist Training Program (NSTP) award, which allows her to attend the Neurosurgeon-Scientist Symposium at the CNS (Houston; fall 2024) and NIH NINDS UE5 (spring 2025) meetings. It also gives her the opportunity to apply for year 2 funding.

Way to go Malia!

