

Established in 1992 by the Research Foundation of the ASCRS, the Mentor Award is conferred biannually in a joint decision by the Young Researcher's Committee of the Research Foundation and by the Research Foundation Board of Trustees. This honor recognizes a member of the ASCRS who has made exceptional contributions to the education and career development of trainees and other colleagues through their commitment to both clinical and scholarly pursuits. This award recognizes that member of the ASCRS who has provided an example of success in his own career while also giving of his own time in furthering the career of younger colleagues.



Dr. James W. Fleshman, Jr.

ASCRS Research Foundation Mentor Award – 2014

It is with great honor and respect that I introduce the most recent recipient of the Mentor Award, chosen by the Young Researchers Committee of the ASCRS Research Foundation. A mentor is defined as a wise and trusted guide or advisor. Jim clearly exemplifies all of these characteristics. He also exceeds them by the fact he constantly strives to make those around him better and enjoys the success of those he mentors greater than his own success. Jim has dedicated his professional life to surgical education and improving the quality of colon and rectal surgery.

Jim has developed a reputation for clinical excellence by always striving to provide his patients with the best care whether it be with new surgical techniques, leading and inspiring his partners and nursing staff, and providing referring physicians a go to person. Throughout his entire career, he has led and inspired by example. In the early 90's, Jim helped to develop and pioneer laparoscopic techniques for colectomy. These

efforts established laparoscopic training programs for colorectal fellows that continue to be taught today. He was instrumental in the development of several clinical trials such as the COST trial and z6051 which have established laparoscopy as a safe and effective technique to treat colon and rectal cancer. Jim has always maintained an educational presence in the operating room and hospital wards by teaching all of the people involved in the care of his patients about the level and quality of care that is required. His presence and communication throughout the hospital have instilled a high level of expectation that has elevated the performance of the healthcare team and is directly translated to the patient.

During his career, Jim has trained at least 45 fellows in Colon and Rectal Surgery. All of these fellows have been tremendously impacted by Jim's leadership and mentorship. The vast majority of the fellows that Jim has trained have gone on to significant leadership positions within their community, the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery, and American surgery. Jim has always stressed the importance of giving back to our Profession and Specialty.

Jim has maintained and embraced a high level of curiosity that motivates him to constantly seek new and innovative ways to improve the quality of care that we can offer our patients. He has been instrumental in several institutional and national clinical trials to define the role of laparoscopy in the management of colorectal cancer, the benefits of tumor debulking and intraperitoneal chemotherapy for the treatment of appendiceal carcinomatosis, and the factors associated with anastomosis leaks. Jim has also been instrumental in the development of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons Research Foundation, which is instrumental in providing young researchers with seed funding for career development and salary support for investigators following the K-award pathway.

Finally, some of Jim's biggest accomplishments as a leader and mentor have been through his contributions to his local and national community. Locally at Washington University, Jim established the Section of Colon and Rectal Surgery as the referral site for the region. The development of his faculty and trainees is nothing short of amazing. He knows the essential steps that individuals need to accomplish in order to succeed in clinical and academic surgery, and he consistently provides those around with opportunities to develop and succeed. He has often said that his individual success and fulfillment are directly related to those around him achieving greater success. His contributions to our Society have been immeasurable. He is a Past President of the ASCRS and the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery, and has

served as a Governor for the American College of Surgeons. Through these positions he has always strived to improve the visibility and reputation of colon and rectal surgery.

In summary, Jim has demonstrated his commitment to strive for excellence in his academic and clinical pursuits and continues to inspire future colorectal surgeons to do the same. On behalf of the Young Researchers Committee of the ASCRS Research Foundation, we are pleased to present the Mentor Award to Dr. James W. Fleshman in recognition of his mentoring of young surgeons and advancement of colorectal surgical research and clinical practice.

Written by Matthew Mutch, MD