



MESSAGES FROM THE MEDICAL BOARD

Dear Lions of Virginia,

It is my honor and privilege to join the Board of the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation. I thank you for your support and promise to continue the superior work of those that have preceded me and those currently serving on the Board.

By way of background, I grew up right here in Virginia, born and raised in Norfolk. After attending Princeton University, I returned to Virginia to attend the University of Virginia Medical School. I stayed at UVA for my internship and residency in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. After completion of my residency, I ventured to Los Angeles, where I studied otology and neurotology as a fellow at the House Ear Clinic. Following my fellowship, I was in private practice at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. My Virginia roots drew me back, and I accepted a faculty position in the Otolaryngology Department at UVA July 1.

I have spent the summer working with Dr. Robert Jahrsdoerfer in our Department learning the finer points of surgery for congenital ear malformations. These malformations involve children born without an ear and ear canal (and, of course, no hearing in the affected ear). A plastic surgeon reconstructs the outer ear or auricle, while we drill an ear canal, free the middle ear bones to vibrate, place an eardrum graft, line the canal with a skin graft, and bring the skin graft out through the reconstructed opening. The surgery is technically quite challenging, and Dr. Jahrsdoerfer has performed this difficult operation on more children than anyone in the world. Dr. "J" will be retiring in a couple months, and I hope to carry on this tradition of excellence at the University of Virginia.

I also hope to study the mechanisms of hearing loss, cochlear hair cell loss, and hair cell regeneration in the lab. The long history of generous support from the Lions Foundation has paved the way for basic science research into the development of the inner ear and cochlear hair cells. We hope to identify the signaling pathways that allow basic embryonic cells to develop into the specialized cells of the cochlea called hair cells.

I thank you again for all your support and look forward to continued collaboration in the years to come.

Warmest regards,
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