NASS Announces 2016 Recognition Award Winners

BOSTON—During its 31st Annual Meeting, the North American Spine Society (NASS) announced the winners of its prestigious 2016 Recognition Awards. NASS presents four annual awards to recognize unique and outstanding contributions to the field of spine care and research.

Honorees are nominated by their peers for their outstanding contributions to NASS and the field of spine care. Three of the awards are named in honor of founding members of NASS who made significant contributions to the early success of the organization. Another recognizes an advocate who makes contributions to federal advocacy efforts on behalf of patients and members of the society.

2016 Leon Wiltse Award: Keith H. Bridwell, MD
To recognize excellence in leadership and/or clinical research in spine care.
Keith Bridwell, MD, has been a prolific researcher on spinal deformity with more than 300 peer-reviewed publications, 40 invited publications and 77 book chapters. His research has advanced spinal deformity surgery for the past 30 years and has culminated in a National Institute of Health R01 grant evaluating operative and nonoperative treatment of adult spinal deformity. Dr. Bridwell has been a champion for adult and pediatric patients with scoliosis and has advocated for his patients through numerous local and national leadership roles. Dr. Bridwell has dedicated his entire career to the advancement of spinal deformity surgery. His attention to detail and individualized care have resulted in many changed lives.
Nominated by Samuel K. Cho, MD and Lukas P. Zebala, MD

2016 Henry Farfan Award: Makarand V. Risbud, PhD
To recognize outstanding contributions in spine-related basic science research.
Dr. Risbud’s research has been solely focused on understanding the underlying physiology and pathophysiology of intervertebral disc degeneration and alleviation of discogenic pain. His pioneering work has discovered that a number of proteins including HIF-1alpha and TonEBP respond to the unique environment that characterizes the nucleus pulposus. More recently, Dr. Risbud has been investigating mechanisms by which inflammatory cytokines promote disc degeneration. Dr. Risbud’s work has been continuously funded by grants from the NIH/NIAMS. He has published more than 120 peer-reviewed articles and, in 2014, co-edited the first book devoted to biology of the intervertebral disc Dr. Risbud is a founding member of the Philadelphia Spine Research Society and is chair and convener of the biennial International Philadelphia Spine Symposium held since 2011.
Nominated by James D. Kang, MD, Irving Shapiro, PhD, Alexander R. Vaccaro, M., PhD and Jill Urban. PhD

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2016 David Selby Award: James B. Reynolds, MD
To recognize contributions to the art and science of spinal disorder management through service to NASS.

James B. Reynolds, MD, has been an effective and important behind-the-scenes committee member for a number of years. He quietly has just done his job each year, never looking for any recognition, simply serving the society and doing it well. He has been involved in committees since 2003, starting with the Patient Safety Committee. He has been chair of the Practice Management Committee as well as Audit Committee. NASS might not be in the strong financial position it is in today if not for committee members like Dr. Reynolds, who devote their time to providing invaluable guidance on critical financial matters. In addition, Dr. Reynolds has a perspective that truly represents the desires and concerns of the “rank and file” members. He always gives sound advice and counsel. He is truly a great representative of the NASS membership.

Nominated by Eric J. Muehlbauer, MJ, CAE

2016 Spine Advocacy Award: Charles A. Mick, MD
To recognize members of the North American Spine Society who have made exceptional contributions to the federal advocacy efforts on behalf of patients and members of the society.

Charles A. Mick, MD, has been one of NASS’ most passionate and thoughtful advocates on all levels of the organization, working through various committees at NASS to promote quality patient spine care. Dr. Mick has primarily lent his expertise to NASS by serving on the American Medical Association’s CPT and Relative Value Update Committee (RUC) and has worked tirelessly on Capitol Hill and with federal agencies to expand NASS’ brand. Dr. Mick served on the Advocacy Council for six years (2005 – 2011) and was a founding member of the Spine Advocates program where he served three years (2006 – 2009) before becoming NASS President in 2013. Dr. Mick’s greatest attribute is his willingness to volunteer his time to NASS whenever he is called upon, no matter the issue.

Nominated by the NASS Advocacy Council

More than 3,500 spine professionals will meet at the NASS 31st Annual Meeting in Boston, October 26-29, 2016 at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. The scientific program will offer more than 800 presentations, including symposia, paper sessions, ePosters, instructional courses and hands-on courses. More than 1,050 scientific abstracts and session proposals were submitted this year. More than 330 exhibitors will offer up the latest spine technologies in the Technical Exhibition area, in more than 81,050 square feet.

The North American Spine Society is a multidisciplinary medical organization dedicated to fostering the highest quality, evidenced-based and ethical spine care by promoting education, research and advocacy. NASS is comprised of more than 8,000 members from several disciplines, including orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, physiatry, neurology, radiology, anesthesiology, research and physical therapy. For more information, visit www.spine.org and find NASS on: NASS Facebook and NASS Twitter.

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