NASS Announces 2017 Recognition Award Winners

ORLANDO, FL—During its 32nd Annual Meeting, the North American Spine Society (NASS) announced the winners of its prestigious 2017 Recognition Awards.

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.

- **Leon Wiltse Award**: K. Daniel Riew, MD
- **Henry Farfan Award**: S. Tim Yoon, MD, PhD
- **David Selby Award**: William Mitchell, MD
- **Spine Advocacy Award**: David A. Wong, MD, MSc, FRCS

### 2017 Leon Wiltse Award: K. Daniel Riew, MD
*To recognize excellence in leadership and/or clinical research in spine care.*
*Nominated by Samuel K. Cho, MD and Lukas P. Zebala, MD*

Dan is a well-known and well-liked member of NASS who has contributed immensely in the area of cervical spine surgery. Besides being one of the most skilled surgeons we would ever come across, Dr. Riew is an outstanding teacher. If not in the OR, many of us benefited from his teaching at cervical courses that he has been running for nearly 20 years in St. Louis. He brings a wealth of experience and fresh perspective during case discussions at national and international meetings. He has advanced the practice of cervical spine surgery, from recognizing the importance of asking patients about dysphagia to minimizing plate abutment to the adjacent levels during ACDF to prevent early disc degeneration. To date, Dr. Riew has close to 250 peer-reviewed publications, has been honored with numerous visiting professorships and has demonstrated national and international leadership as past president of CSRS and current chair of AOSpine International. On top of all of that, Dan is a humble person.
2017 Henry Farfan Award: S. Tim Yoon, MD, PhD
To recognize outstanding contributions in spine-related basic science research.
Nominated by Jeff Wang, MD

Tim Yoon is one of the few real clinician scientists who practices surgery today. Dr. Yoon has had a deep interest in intervertebral disc biology since the start of his career. His lab pioneered research on the effect of bone morphogenetic proteins and LMP-1 on disc cells. His lab has investigated multiple different disc degeneration models, including direct and indirect injury models, and even a natural aging model in rabbit discs. More recently, his focus has been on less invasive methods of stimulating disc cells. Another line of research has been on the effect of a small molecule consisting of only 12 amino acids. Dr. Yoon also has an active clinical research and clinical-training research program. Dr. Yoon’s research has led to multiple awards, including the coveted ISSLS prize twice and multiple outstanding paper awards. As a member of NASS, he has served on the biologics committee and research fund committee. He also served as the Deputy Editor of Basic Science for The Spine Journal. He has served in many positions in the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine. He is a leader in AOSpine, serving as a steering committee member of the Degenerative Knowledge Forum and as one of the organizers of the Global Spine Society. Dr. Yoon was one of the founders of the Korean American Spine Society.

2017 David Selby Award: William Mitchell, MD
To recognize contributions to the art and science of spinal disorder management through service to NASS.
Nominated by David O’Brien Jr, MD; William Sullivan, MD; Donna M. Lahey, RNFA; Edward Dohring, MD

It is with respect and admiration for his loyalty, dedication, and service to NASS that we, as a group, would like to co-nominate William Mitchell, MD for the David Selby Award. Bill has been a member of NASS for approximately 15 years, during which time he has freely dedicated his time, energy, and expertise while serving in a variety of committee and board positions, including but not limited to Coding Committee Chair, Health Policy Council Director, and Chair of Section Development. Bill has been invaluable serving as our NASS CPT Advisor for approximately the past 14 years, representing all NASS members in the fight for appropriate coding and reimbursement. He does this with strength and purpose, and has been instrumental in making sure the voice of NASS is heard and understood. He continues to actively serve NASS membership as part of the coding committee by teaching courses, by responding to coding questions submitted by members, and by being one of the top resources in our society pertaining to coding and reimbursement issues. Bill is always there to help when requested, often contributing to SpineLine articles and conference calls at the requests of other committee chairs and staff liaisons even when he is not an active member of those committees. He is often asked to represent NASS at meetings with other societies and with various payers who respect his advice and opinions. He continues to devote countless voluntary hours to NASS and exemplifies the spirit and service behind the David Selby Award. He always gives sound advice and counsel. He is truly a great representative of the NASS membership.
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More than 3,000 spine professionals will meet at the NASS 32nd Annual Meeting in Orlando, October 25-28, 2017 at the Orange County Convention Center to share the latest information, innovative techniques and procedures, best practices and new technologies in the spine field. NASS 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, NASS Facebook and NASS Twitter.

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2017 Spine Advocacy Award: David A. Wong, MD, MSc, FRCS

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.

Nominated by the NASS Advocacy Council

The NASS Advocacy Council is honored to nominate David A. Wong, MD, MSc, FRCS as NASS’ 2017 Spine Advocate of the Year. Dr. Wong has diligently served on NASS’ Advocacy Council since 2008 and since that time has attended numerous legislative conferences in Washington, DC on behalf of NASS and the Alliance of Specialty Medicine. In addition to his advocacy work, Dr. Wong has developed a strong rapport with his local members of Congress, hosted a tour of his clinic, and coordinated local fundraisers with his U.S. Representative. Dr. Wong offers a tremendous amount of perspective to legislators and is an invaluable resource for NASS as he frequently provides expert testimony on legislative and regulatory matters to lawmakers and Congressional health committee staff. Dr. Wong has never shied away from answering the call to action and has made an everlasting mark on advocacy on behalf of spine care providers and their patients.