CHICAGO – The North American Spine Society (NASS) has announced the winners of its prestigious 2019 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 contributes to federal advocacy efforts on behalf of patients and members of the society.

- **Henry Farfan Award**: David J. Kennedy, MD
- **David Selby Award**: Gregory L. Whitcomb, DC
- **Leon Wiltse Award**: Charles G. Fisher, MD, FRCSC, MHS
- **Spine Advocacy Award**: Neil Kahanovitz, MD

**2019 Henry Farfan Award: David J. Kennedy, MD**

*To recognize excellence in leadership and/or clinical research in spine care.*

David J. Kennedy, MD, is a Professor and Chair of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Vanderbilt University Medical Center where his practice focuses on nonoperative and interventional spine care. He completed his residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Washington in Seattle where he served as Chief Resident, and then a Spine and Sports Fellowship at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Dr. Kennedy's research has focused on the safety and efficacy of interventional spine procedures. He has pioneered safe injection techniques and is an internationally recognized expert in interventional spine procedures. His definitive, randomized-controlled trial on particulate versus nonparticulate steroids in transforaminal epidural injections has influenced practice patterns, which should reduce the complications (spinal cord injury and death) associated with these procedures. Similarly, Dr. Kennedy's study on facet injections versus
radiofrequency ablation has had a substantial influence on practice patterns, resulting in better pain relief in spine patients.

2019 David Selby Award: Gregory L. Whitcomb, DC

To recognize contributions to the art and science of spinal disorder management through service to NASS.

Gregory L. Whitcomb, DC, is a 1981 graduate of Palmer College, a board-certified chiropractor and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). In 1995, Dr. Whitcomb was among the lead team to conceptualize and launch a multidisciplinary spine program offering integrated surgical and nonsurgical services at MCW where he became the first faculty-appointed DC in the institution’s history. This commitment to mutual cooperation of spine professionals has led to advances in patient care. He continues full practice at MCW SpineCare where he also spearheaded the development of a translational program for pregnancy-related axial pain in concert with the MCW Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Whitcomb has chaired multiple CME courses and has presented both nationally and internationally on evidence-informed, gender-specific, interdisciplinary and psychologically informed spine practice.

Leon Wiltse Award: Charles G. Fisher, MD, FRCSC, MHS

To recognize excellence in leadership and/or clinical research in spine care.

Charles G. Fisher, MD, FRCSC, MHS, is a Professor and Head of the Division of Spine Surgery in the Combined Neurosurgical and Orthopaedic Spine Program in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of British Columbia. He has demonstrated nationally and internationally recognized leadership in both clinical research and spine care throughout his career. During his first years in practice at an academic surgical spine practice, Dr. Fisher completed a Master’s in Health Care and Epidemiology. This provided the expertise in the design and evaluation of clinical trials that he needed to establish a research center focused on spine trauma and health related quality of life outcomes. Dr. Fisher was an early proponent of the judicious use of evidence-based medicine in spine surgery and published and lectured on this topic.
2019 Spine Advocacy Award: Neil Kahanovitz, 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.

Neil Kahanovitz, MD, served as NASS President in 2002 and is widely considered NASS’ first real advocate – having pushed to establish the National Association of Spine Specialists. Dr. Kahanovitz got NASS involved in yearly Capitol Hill Days and also started “Spine Health Days.” During his Presidency, both The Spine Journal and SpineLine began. Further, Dr. Kahanovitz had many preexisting relationships with members of Congress and introduced NASS to several Congressmen and Senators as well as certain state legislators. He was awarded a Commendation from the United States House Physician’s Office for surgery performed on Members of the Supreme Court and Congress, and frequently testified on health care issues at Senate and House hearings. He was also awarded the Order of the Supreme Soviet Medal of Personal Courage by Mikhail Gorbachev for his humanitarian work in the USSR.

More than 3,000 spine professionals will meet at the NASS 34th Annual Meeting in Chicago, September 25-28, 2019 at McCormick Place 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 8,500 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.