

Gregg Zoarski, The Ninth President of the ASSR

Gregg Zoarski assumed the Presidency of the American Society of Spine Radiology on May 1, 2003, at the annual business meeting of the ASSR. Gregg's new leadership position highlights the dominant role that interventional spine procedures have played in the ascendancy of the ASSR as a growing and vital society.

Gregg was born in the Yale New Haven Hospital, in New Haven, CT, in 1959, to Howard Zoarski, a district court judge in New Haven, and Barbara Zoarski, a dental hygienist. He received all of his formal education in the Northeast. After secondary schooling at the Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven, he went on to Vassar College, graduating in 1981 with a bachelor's degree in biology. He subsequently attended medical school at the University of Connecticut in Farmington, receiving his MD degree in 1985. As a medical student on the medicine and neurology services, Gregg became excited about neuroradiology when he accompanied a patient with a seizure to the CT scanner. Although the images were crude compared with today's multisection CT scanners, the ability to look rapidly inside of the patient's head and make a diagnosis of cerebral parenchymal hemorrhage left Gregg astounded. Following a medical internship at Overlook Hospital in Summit, NJ, Gregg completed a radiology residency at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park, NY, where his interest in neuroradiology was even further enforced by the strong mentorship of Joseph Zito. Orlando Ortiz, the immediate past president of the ASSR, was a resident in that same program, and Gregg remembers well the example Orlando set as a goal-oriented and hard-working colleague.

After his residency, Gregg traveled across the country to UCLA for a 2-year fellowship in neuroradiology, finishing there in 1992. While at UCLA, he took full advantage of the strong neuroradiology division led by John Bentson, as well as Fernando Vinuela, Gary Duckwiler, and Jacques Dion. Rob Lufkin was particularly influential in this early stage of Gregg's academic career. Of note were Gregg's first publications on contrast-enhanced MR and fast MR imaging in head and neck lesions.

Gregg returned to the East Coast in 1992 to join Yuji Numaguchi and Mike Rothman and become a faculty member in the Department of Radiology at the University of Maryland. He rose through the academic ranks to the position he now holds, associate professor and director of diagnostic and interventional neuroradiology. Yuji Numaguchi was largely responsible for helping Gregg develop additional skills in neurovascular intervention. John Mathis was subsequently responsible for further sparking Gregg's interest in interventional spine and vascular procedures, the result of which has been numerous publi-



cations and presentations on subjects such as percutaneous vertebroplasty, assessment and treatment of traumatic lesions of neck vessels, and treatment of cerebral vasospasm. Gregg has been an investigator or consultant on numerous grants, both corporate and National Institutes of Health sponsored, and has served on many administrative committees both at the University of Maryland and in the ASNR and ASSR.

Gregg and his wife Jennifer have a two-year-old son, Noah. They live in Baltimore and also spend time when they can at a second home in Stevensville, along the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The couple shares an interest in collecting art and antiques, particularly 19th-century art and sculpture.

The goals Gregg has set for his ASSR presidency focus on increasing society membership and visibility, appealing not only to radiologists but also to those who are specialists in allied fields. He envisions more collaboration with related societies such as the North American Spine Society and the Cervical Spine Research Society. He also sees the need for the society to strike a balance between spine imaging and spine intervention, assuring that no undue emphasis is put on either of these fields of interest. To encourage

research in spine radiology, the newly formed ASSR mentor program for young investigators will continue to receive a top priority within the ASSR. Gregg has nearly finalized plans for corporate support of an annual ASSR spine fellowship that will award a total of up to \$30,000 per year to meritorious investigations in spine radiology. The overall result of these research programs will be an enhanced recognition of the ASSR in its mission to foster novel investigations in spine radiology. Efforts are already underway to

improve access and visibility through redesign of the website (www.TheASSR.org), a gateway for those interested in membership and in the society's educational and award programs.

It does not take long to recognize that Gregg is an optimistic, forward-looking, and content person. His vision for spine radiology and can-do spirit, combined with his cheerful outlook on life, are ingredients for the continued growth and success of the ASSR.

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