Opening Remarks
Nancy L. Ascher, MD, PhD
Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery

Special Remarks
Hobart W. Harris, MD, MPH
Professor and Chief, General Surgery

Awards Presentation
UCSF Faculty

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Aaron Ahearn, MD, PhD  Rita Mukhtar, MD
Farzad Alemi, MD  Amar Nijagal, MD
Kyle Belek, MD  Mauricio Kuri, MD
Susan Lee, MD  Shin-e Lin, MD
Jong-Ping Lu, MD  Kristine West, MD
William Blaisdell was born in 1927 in Santa Barbara into a family of California physicians and surgeons with strong historical links to Stanford University. His grandfather, F. Ellsworth Blaisdell, Sr., graduated from Cooper Medical College during the gold rush years and became Professor of Surgery at Stanford. His father also trained at Stanford and, after completing postgraduate training in radiology, he rounded out his career as a radiologist. Dr. F. William Blaisdell’s maternal grandfather, Ehler Eiskamp, had the distinction of being the first surgery resident that Stanford produced. F. William Blaisdell entered Stanford as an undergraduate when he was sixteen years old and started medical school two and one half years later, graduating with an MD in the first post-war time class in 1952. While in medical school he recalls that he was attracted by surgery, but thought he wanted to do everything. So, against the advice of his surgical mentors at Stanford, he obtained a rotating internship at Philadelphia General Hospital, where he gained much experience with all aspects of patient care within that 3,000-bed institution. The Korean War intervened and Dr. Blaisdell honed his clinical skills further, serving as a destroyer division medical officer in charge of four ships with 1200 sailors. In 1954, now certain that he wanted to be a surgeon, he was accepted into Stanford’s coveted residency program and in 1956 went to Peter Bent Brigham Hospital for extra study, a clear path to becoming chief resident at Stanford. In Boston, he spent time scrubbing in on closed cardiac procedures with Dwight Harken and working in vascular surgery with Richard Warren. After his time as chief resident at SFGH and Stanford Hospital, and with the help of his mentors at Stanford and Harvard, he was accepted as a fellow in cardiovascular surgery on Cooley’s and DeBakey’s renowned service at Baylor in Houston. In 1960, Dr. Blaisdell was recruited to be full-time chief of the surgery service at the VA in San Francisco by UC Surgery Chair, Leon Goldman. Here he quickly built teaching programs in vascular and cardiac surgery that were unique in the VA system at that time. He also served on the search committee that brought J. E. Dunphy to UCSF in 1964. In 1966 Dr. Blaisdell moved to SFGH to become chief of the surgical service there. Working with talented colleagues and residents, Dr. Blaisdell next developed the nation’s first organized trauma service at SFGH. While changing the structure of critical care in the American hospital, he also actively pursued surgical research, studying disseminated vascular coagulation, developing new techniques in vascular surgery, and characterizing respiratory distress syndrome. Dr. Blaisdell continued his career of determined program-building when, in 1978, he accepted the chairmanship of surgery at UC Davis, then the University of California’s newest medical school. Dr. Blaisdell, along with Dr. Moses Grossman, has published a book-length history of San Francisco General Hospital, and is currently working on a biography of UC’s pioneer vascular surgeon Edwin “Jack” Wylie.

Luis O. Vasconez, M.D.

Luis O. Vasconez, M.D. is a Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Division of Plastic Surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is also a consultant at the UAB, Comprehensive Cancer Center. Doctor Vasconez is internationally renowned for his original contributions in reconstruction of the breast, particularly immediately after mastectomy, and in endoscopic plastic surgery. Doctor Vasconez has trained more than 60 plastic surgeons who are disseminated throughout the country and are distinguished members of the plastic surgery community. Many of these plastic surgeons hold positions in academic plastic surgery. In addition, Doctor Vasconez’s fellowship for foreign scholars has contributed and complemented the plastic surgical knowledge of distinguished international scholars from more than 30 countries who are now leading plastic surgeons in their countries. Doctor Vasconez was born into a distinguished family in Ecuador. He became a U.S. citizen by naturalization in 1970. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of Miami in 1958 and received his M.D. from Washington University of St. Louis in 1962. He trained for both general and plastic surgery at the University of Rochester and the University of Florida. His plastic surgery training was with two eminently distinguished plastic surgeons – Dr. M. J. Jurkiewicz in Gainesville, Florida, and Dr. R. McCormack in Rochester, New York. Doctor Vasconez was professor and Chief of the Division of Plastic Surgery at the University of California at San Francisco from 1978-1985. He then moved to the University of Alabama at Birmingham where he has been chief of the Division of Plastic Surgery for the past two decades. Over the years he has been a distinguished visiting professor at more than 50 U.S. university programs, and a distinguished guest lecturer at many international academic centers including Mexico City, Mexico; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Adelaide, Australia; Hong Kong; Tokyo and Sapporo, Japan, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Spain, Portugal, Germany and others. Doctor Vasconez has written more than 160 peer-reviewed articles. He has authored 10 textbooks and contributed chapters to more than 40 textbooks in plastic surgery. He coauthored a three-volume "Encyclopedia of Flaps" (presently in the 3rd Edition) with Drs. Elizabeth Hall-Findlay and Berish Strauch which won Medical Publication of the Year in 1991 which was presented by the American Publishers Association. He has been a board member of the American Board of Plastic Surgery, as well as the American Board of Surgery. He is a board member of Medical Mission Ecuador. Doctor Vasconez received the 2005 Pickrell Award from the Southeastern Society of Plastic Surgeons. His multiple memberships include the American Association of Plastic Surgeons, American Surgical Association, and Southern Surgical Association.

Doctor Vasconez is married to Diane A. (Drury) Vasconez, and they have been married 43 years. They have three daughters and two grand daughters. Dr. Vasconez’s younger brother, Dr. Henry Vasconez, is Chief of Plastic Surgery at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.
William Silen was born in 1927 at Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco. A first-generation American, he went to George Washington High School in San Francisco, where he met his wife, and attended U.C. Berkeley. He received his M.D. from the University of California in 1949. He thought about specializing in endocrinology, but attributes his change of heart to Leon Goldman, whom he considered a great role model, and who went on to become Chairman of the Department of Surgery in 1956. After Dr. Silen finished his surgical internship at UC Hospital, the Korean war intervened and he spent the next two years at Travis Air Force Base before returning to UC to finish his residency. He hoped to be an academic internist-surgeon and his first academic position was at the University of Colorado, but he was recruited back to UC by Leon Goldman to be Chief of Surgery at San Francisco General Hospital. In addition to running the surgical service, Dr. Silen managed to find time to do research on the mechanisms of secretin and primary aldosteronism and to be an accomplished teacher, who received numerous awards. In 1966, Dr. Silen was recruited as Chairman of Surgery and Surgeon-in-Chief at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, where, with funding from the National Institutes of Health, he pursued his research interests in the physiologic effects of gastrointestinal operations. During his leadership of the surgical department at Beth Israel Hospital for 28 years, Dr. Silen was known as an inspiring teacher, a meticulous surgeon who pioneered the use of lumpectomy for breast cancer, a prominent researcher on the biology of the digestive tract, and a leader who had long championed women surgeons. His demonstrated record of accomplishment led to his appointment, at the age of 67, as the first Dean for Faculty Development and Diversity at Harvard Medical School. In facing the challenging task of helping build a more diverse faculty school-wide, Dr. Silen brought the empathy born of having personally struggled against discrimination, because when he applied for medical school and residencies, there were quotas against Jews. Noting that the path to academic medicine can be a particularly difficult one financially because of the additional years that must be committed to research, and that this extra step can be daunting for students loaded down with debt from medical school, Dr. Silen directed his efforts at enhancing the development of junior faculty. In 2001, the Harvard Medical School Faculty Council established the William Silen Lifetime Achievement in Mentoring Award, named in his honor as a lifetime exemplar of the mentor. Dr. Silen, the Johnson and Johnson Distinguished Professor of Surgery, Emeritus at the Harvard Medical School, was the first recipient of the award. He served as President of the Boston Surgical Society and the Society for the Surgery of the Alimentary Tract. Among his many other honors and awards, Dr. Silen has been named an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and a member of the Institutes of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences. In 1992, he received the Julius Friedenwald Medal from the American Gastroenterological Association.
Diana L. Farmer, M.D.

Dr. Diana Farmer is Professor of Clinical Surgery, Pediatrics, Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences, Surgeon-in-Chief of UCSF Children's Hospital, Vice Chair of the Department of Surgery, and Division Chief of Pediatric Surgery at the University of California, San Francisco. She has always loved science. At Wellesley College, she studied marine biology and molecular biology, then did research at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, at Stanford, and in Bermuda. Farmer was a Rhodes Scholar finalist in 1976, when it first became available to women. Interests in medicine and ethics initially led her to pursue a combination law and medicine degree at the University of Washington in Seattle. Once there, however, she discovered that she loved surgery, and felt that with surgery, she could really make a difference in patients’ lives. She received her MD from the University of Washington in Seattle, where she subsequently completed her internship. Her general surgery training was completed at the University of California, San Francisco, and her Pediatric Surgical training was completed at the Children’s Hospital of Michigan, where she was a member of their Fetal Treatment team. Dr. Farmer has had an interesting career which includes being on faculty at the National University of Singapore as the Luce Scholar, and holding a position as Assistant Medical Director for Cancer Immunology for DuPont Pharmaceuticals at its main headquarters.

Dr. Farmer’s research interests include fetal therapy interventions for myelomeningocele and gastrochisis. She is well recognized for her expertise in complex surgical repair of thoracic, airway, and intestinal anomalies, as well as for cancer surgery in neonatal, pediatric, and adolescent patients. In addition, Dr. Farmer is an integral member of the Fetal Treatment Center team, skilled in the surgical care of fetal patients with life-threatening congenital anomalies. In particular, she spearheads the research to evaluate the safety and efficacy of in utero endoscopic repair of myelomeningocele, and is Co-Investigator on several fetal surgical clinical trials.

The author of numerous publications and recipient of national and international honors and awards, including the UCSF Outstanding Women Faculty Chancellor’s Recognition Award, Dr. Farmer is has served a US Principal Investigator for the INDO-U.S. Science and Technology Forum Program in Education, Training, and Exchanges, in Varanasi, India, and as a visiting Professor in Japan, Senegal, and India.

Oscar Salvatierra, M.D.

Dr. Salvatierra is Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, Active Emeritus, and an Advising Dean at Stanford. He has dedicated his professional life to the advancement of organ transplantation, the treatment of kidney disease, and the education and training of medical students, residents and fellows. Dr. Salvatierra obtained his B.S. from Georgetown University and his M.D. from USC. He did a urology residency at USC-LA and a transplant surgery fellowship at UCSF. Most of his career has been spent at UCSF (Chief, Transplant Service) and Stanford (Director, Pediatric Kidney Transplantation). With more than 280 publications, his medical firsts include donor-specific transfusions and definition of related sensitization patterns; definition of hemodynamic changes with transplantation of adult-sized kidneys into infants; management strategies for severe congenital structural abnormalities of the urinary tract followed by transplantation; and with colleague Dr. Minnie Sarwal, the introduction of complete steroid-free immunosuppression for children and the demonstration of long-term immunological protection of adult-sized kidneys transplanted into infants. He has served as President of five transplant professional societies, including The International Transplantation Society, the American Society of Transplant Surgeons and UNOS. He was the first Governor elected to represent transplantation in the American College of Surgeons. He worked with Al Gore to draft the National Organ Transplant Act which provides for the current national organ transplantation system, a national registry to assess organ transplantation outcomes for future research and policy, and the establishment of a bone marrow registry. He chaired the NIH National Advisory Board dealing with kidney research in the United States, and chaired the Stanford Medical School Faculty Senate. He introduced Pope John Paul II for his encyclical on organ transplantation. His numerous honors include a Special Commendation Resolution by the California State Legislature, Knighthood by the Republic of Italy, the Presidential Medal from the Republic of Argentina, the UCSF Chancellor’s Award for Public Service, a Special Recognition Award by the UCSF Chancellor, Stanford’s Oscar Salvatierra Annual Lectureship in Transplantation, Rambar-Mark Award as Clinician of the Year and Franklin Ebaugh Award for Medical Student Advising. This year, he won the Albion Walter Hewlett Award for his commitment to the highest standards of patient care combined with a life of scholarship and teaching. He is listed in Who’s Who in the World, Who’s Who in America, Who’s Who in Medicine and Health Care and Who’s Who in American Education. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first successful organ transplant, he was named one of 12 international Pioneers in Transplantation. He also served in the U.S. Army as a combat surgeon in Vietnam and subsequently had an 8 year U.S. Federal Court appointment on the national commission that administered the Agent Orange litigation settlement, amongst its ultimate accomplishments being the recognition of service connected disabilities for Vietnam veterans. He is married to Pamela and has two children, Mark and Lisa Marie.
Leonard Rosenman, M.D.

Born in New York, NY in 1918, Dr. Leonard Rosenman received his A.B. and M.D. from the University of Michigan. It was during medical school that Dr. Rosenman developed an abiding interest in surgical history. After completing his surgical internship at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, Dr. Rosenman served overseas as Battalion Surgeon in the 77th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army from 1942-1945 and received the Bronze Star Medal. He returned to Mass General to complete his surgical residency in 1949 before moving to San Francisco, where he entered private practice in general surgery and vascular surgery. Dr. Rosenman served as Chief of the Department of Surgery at Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center from 1958 to 1973, Chief of Staff at Mount Zion Hospital, and as Clinical Professor of Surgery at UCSF. He also served as Clinical Instructor and Associate in Surgery at Stanford University School of Medicine, and was an Attending Surgeon for the U.S. Veterans Administration. Dr. Rosenman, who reads French and Italian, and can "handle" Latin and a bit of Greek and Flemish, says that his work as a translator has allowed him to explore an interest in surgical history that began when he was a medical student more than 60 years ago. Contending that he "took up the pen when I gave up the knife", Dr. Rosenman has devoted himself for more than a decade to translating most of the seminal surgical treatises of the Middle Ages, which were written largely in Latin and later published in French and Italian. Produced mostly between A.D. 1170 and 1330, they reintroduced the surgical art of the Greeks and Romans into medieval Europe before the Great Plague came along. Dr. Rosenman says his purpose in translating these works was to provide English-speaking American medical students with materials about the origins of their profession. He has published nine translated works, and a tenth is forthcoming. The books cover an eclectic assortment of problems, such as carbuncles, buboes, gangrene, abortion, amputations and "wide eyes that seem about to pop out of the head." Not surprisingly, much of the advice in the books is no longer relevant—a chapter on the "extraction of arrows, darts and spears," by Bruno Da Longoburgo suggested a way to deal with thorns and lances: "Avicenna said that a poultice of shredded frog is a marvelous attractant, and similarly, minced crab meat and lizard when it is freshly sliced." Nonetheless, Rosenman says, "The economics, the politics, the turf fights -- it could be yesterday." He has donated the books to medical schools around the country, requesting only that they be kept on open shelves of libraries rather than rare-book sections. Dr. Rosenman and his wife Helen have four children.


Orville F. Grimes was born in 1916 in San Bernardino, California. After graduating from the U.C. Berkeley in 1937, he attended medical school at Northwestern University in Chicago. His surgical residency at UCSF was interrupted by World War II. Dr. Grimes was stationed with the 124 Evacuation Hospital, European Theatre, and the 300th General Hospital in Naples, Italy. He then returned to UCSF and completed his residency in 1949, after which he became an Assistant Professor of Surgery and Chief of Thoracic Surgery at San Francisco General Hospital. An extremely active laboratory and clinical researcher, Dr. Grimes' interests encompassed the physiology of the cardio-esophageal junction, experimental replacement of tracheobronchial defects with silicone and other prostheses, management of esophageal hiatal hernia, surgical aspects of emphysema and the role of surgery in management, management and production of traumatic pneumothorax, acute and chronic pulmonary abscesses, and the relationship of chronic abscesses to coexistent pulmonary carcinoma. In studies conducted between 1952 and 1975 in the Pulmonary Function Laboratory at SFGH, Dr. Grimes, in collaboration with Dr. Roger Wilson, compared various methods of preparation of bronchial secretions for both cytological and bacteriological studies. This important work was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Dr. Grimes also pursued clinical studies of extrahepatic biliary malignancies, gas gangrene in the abdominal wall after elective emergency surgery, factors relating to five-year survival in patients with carcinoma of the lung who underwent exploratory thoracotomy and resection, achalasia of the esophagus, benign and malignant thymic tumors. In collaboration with Dr. Orlo Clark, who was then a surgical resident, Dr. Grimes investigated patients with diverticula of the esophagus, with special emphasis on associated neuromuscular disorders. Commensurate with his prodigious research interests, Dr. Grimes served on the editorial boards of numerous journals. He became Vice Chief of the Medical Staff at Moffitt Hospital in 1963 and Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery at UCSF in 1965. Dr. Grimes was President of the H.C. Naffziger Surgical Society, served on the International Committee on Pulmonary Surgery for the American College of Chest Physicians, and was a member of many scientific societies. Dr. Grimes died in 1998.
Samuel Lee Kountz, the eldest son of a Baptist minister and grandson of a slave, was born in Lexa, Arkansas, in 1930. One of the first black students to graduate from the University of Arkansas Medical School in Little Rock, Kountz went on to complete his medical training at Stanford, where, while working with Dr. Roy Cohn, he performed the first successful transplant between humans who were not identical twins in 1961. Six years later, he and a team of researchers at UCSF developed the prototype for the Belzer kidney perfusion machine, which could preserve kidneys for up to 50 hours from the time they are taken from a donor’s body. It is now standard equipment in hospitals and research laboratories around the world. Among Kountz’s other contributions were the discovery that large doses of the steroid drug methylprednisolone could reverse acute rejection of a transplanted kidney, and that reimplantation—the implantation of a second donor kidney at the earliest indication that the first might be rejected—could mean the difference between death and survival for transplant patients. A tireless proponent of organ donation, he once performed a kidney transplant on live television, inspiring some 20,000 viewers to offer their kidneys to patients who needed them. In addition, his groundbreaking research in the area of tissue typing helped improve the results of kidney transplantation and led to the increased use of kidneys from unrelated donors. At the time of his death, he had personally performed some 500 kidney transplants, the most performed by any physician in the world at that time. He later became chief of the Kidney Transplant Service at the University of California, San Francisco. In 1972 he left California to accept the position of professor and chairperson of the department of surgery at the State University of New York’s Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. Driven by a deep social consciousness and a commitment to humanity, he spent the last five years of his career working to improve medical care in the black community. Thanks to Kountz’s efforts, Downstate’s organ transplant program quickly became one of the best in the country. Kountz produced close to 100 articles and investigative reports and co-authored dozens more. Among his many professional honors were the 1964 Young Investigator’s Award from the American College of Cardiology, the Lederle Medical Faculty Award, and Man of the Year awards from the Kidney Foundation of Northern California and the International Congress of the Transplantation Society. In addition, he was the first black person to serve as president of the Society of University Surgeons. He received honorary degrees from the University of Arkansas, the University of California, San Francisco, and Howard University. Both the Kountz- Kyle building at AM&N College in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and the Kountz Pavilion at Harlem Hospital in New York City were named in his honor. Dr. Kountz died in 1981, at the age of 51. In July of 1980 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People presented an Afro- Academic, Technological, and Scientific Olympics program award—a special high school science prize for African American students—in his honor. Five years later the World’s First International Symposium on Renal (kidney) Failure in Blacks was dedicated to his memory. Dr. Kountz was survived by his wife, Grace, whom he married in 1958, and three children, Donald, Keith, and Ellen.

Mary H. McGrath, M.D., M.P.H.
Dr. McGrath is Professor of Clinical Surgery in the Division of Plastic Surgery at UCSF. Dr. McGrath received her medical degree from St. Louis University. She completed a residency in general surgery at the University of Colorado Medical Center, and a plastic surgery residency at Yale University Medical Center. She holds a Master’s in Public Health in Health Policy and Management from George Washington University. Dr. McGrath is certified by the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Plastic Surgery. Before joining the faculty at the University of California in 2003, she was a full-time academic faculty member at Yale University School of Medicine, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in New York, and was Chief of the Division of Plastic Surgery and Residency Training Program Director at The George Washington University Medical Center for 16 years.

Dr. McGrath has enjoyed many “firsts” being the first woman chief of a division of Plastic Surgery in the US, the first female training program director in plastic surgery, the first woman to serve on the American Board of Plastic Surgery, and the first woman President of a national plastic surgery organization. She has been Chairman of the Plastic Surgery Research Council, President of the Northeastern Society of Plastic Surgeons, and Chairman of the National Endowment for Plastic Surgery. At present, she is Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and is a member of the Plastic Surgery Residency Review Committee. Dr. McGrath has a long-standing commitment to the American College of Surgeons and is the ACS First Vice-President Elect. She has been President of the DC Chapter, on the Board of Governors, and Chair of the Advisory Councils representing the surgical specialties. From 1997-2006 she served on the ACS Board of Regents and was Vice-Chair of the Board of Regents in 2005-2006. She has chaired the ACS Committee on Ethics, CESTE (Committee on Emerging Surgical Technology and Education), and the Communications Committee.

Her main clinical interests are body contouring and the reconstruction skin tumors and breast defects. She is the author of over 130 publications, and is regarded as an authority on implantable devices and the injectable materials used in Plastic Surgery. She is active as a member of FDA General and Plastic Surgery Advisory Panel and study sections at NIAMS (the NIH National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases). She’s been on the editorial board of five journals, and is a guest reviewer for nine additional journals. Dr. McGrath has been Visiting Professor and lecturer more than 300 times, both in the United States and abroad. Dr. McGrath’s special interests include resident education, bioethics, and quality improvement efforts in clinical care. She is Director of Resident and Fellow Affairs in the UCSF Office of Graduate Medical Education, and is editor-in-chief of Ethical Issues in Clinical Surgery, two volumes published in June 2007 by the American College of Surgeons as course material for examining ethical issues in surgical practice.

Dr. McGrath’s greatest joys are her children. Her daughter, Dr. Margaret Simon, is a resident in Family Medicine who graduated from UCSF medical school last May, and is living proof that a child can survive having two surgeons as parents. Her son, Richard Simon, is a young lawyer at a firm in LA where his work hours are punishing him for any past comments about a neglectful mother.