



MURIEL STEELE SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2021 EVENTS AND UPDATES

Dear Muriel Steele Society Members,

Happy Fall! We want to send a special thank you to **Dr. Sosa** and the Department of Surgery for sponsoring a **UCSF Department of Surgery Institutional Membership** to the **Association of Women Surgeons (AWS)** for this academic year. With this, all women categorical General Surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, and Vascular Surgery Residents automatically had their AWS membership renewed. If you belong to this group of residents and *did not* receive an email from the AWS with your membership registration information, please let us know.

This month is both the 2021 American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress as well as the Association of Women Surgeons annual meeting. We have many UCSF presenters at both and encourage all to attend!

[Register here](#) for the 2021 American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress, held virtually from **October 23-27**.

[Register here](#) for the AWS annual conference, held virtually from **October 16-17**.

Recently, the **Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center (HDFCCC)** formed a **Gender Equity Committee**, led by Dr. Katherine Van Loon, Dr. Bridget Keenan, and Dr. Amanda Sibley. The mission of the committee is to **promote and foster a supportive environment within the HDFCCC that advocates for the equitable advancement of women and gender minority leaders in cancer care, education, and research**. To assess the current state and identify prevailing issues among oncology-related faculty, the committee has put together a survey. We invite all **women faculty who care for cancer patients or are cancer researchers** to complete the anonymous [survey](#).

This week, we held our virtual wellness event, **“Responding to gender microaggressions.”** Thank you to **Dr. Denise Davis** and **Dr. Scott Bauer** for leading this workshop. We shared our experiences with gender microaggressions (building community with each other and allies), learned to address gender microaggressions

when they inevitably happen, and learned several evidence-based approaches to build a more inclusive culture.

Also last month, **Dr. Denise Davis** hosted a **Women of Color in Surgery and Medicine Mentorship Brunch**. Thank you to Dr. Davis for two wonderful events, and thank you to medical student **Kelsey Ogomori** for her help in organizing the brunch!



This month, we will be hosting a **Job Negotiation Panel** on **October 12th** from 7-8pm ([Zoom](#)). Panelists with multiple perspectives include Dr. Julie Ann Sosa (Chair, UCSF Department of Surgery), Dr. Rachel Yang (Breast Surgeon, recent UCSF fellowship graduate), Dr. Amanda Mueller (MIS Surgeon, recent UCSF fellowship graduate), and Dr. Nicholas Webster (Microsurgeon, recent UCSF fellowship graduate). We plan for an informal setting where the participants can ask any questions about tricks of the trade in obtaining their first job.



We are so excited to share a brand new spotlight featuring **Dr. Rita Mukhtar**, a breast and acute care surgeon here at UCSF and an Associate Program Director of our general surgery residency. Dr. Mukhtar was interviewed by medical student **Gurbani Kaur**. To read our prior **MSS Spotlights**, the interviews are uploaded [here](#) on the MSS website.

Finally, for those who have not come across this yet, we wanted to share a recent [JAMA Surgery](#) publication examining pregnancy outcomes among surgeons that was also featured in the [New York Times](#). The authors found that women surgeons were more likely to delay pregnancy, use assisted reproductive technology, undergo nonelective C-section, and suffer pregnancy loss compared to women who are not surgeons. We look forward to discussing this important topic in future MSS events.

Thanks for reading!

Your **MSS Communications Committee**

Muriel Steele Society Spotlight Series

Dr. Rita Mukhtar

Interview by Gurbani Kaur

Gurbani: I imagine that strong mentorship had a role in guiding you to where you are today and embodying the “U Can Stay Forever” motto. Can you tell us about the role mentorship had in your surgical career?

Dr. Mukhtar: One of my main mentors has been Dr. Laura Esserman, who is the director of our Breast Care Center and is a very well-known breast cancer surgeon and researcher. I heard her give a talk when I was a second-year surgical resident and I was just really inspired by what she was speaking about and her passion for treating breast cancer patients and innovating in the field. So, I approached her after her talk and introduced myself. She was just incredibly open and warm. We started talking after that and planning for me to do my research years with her. There have been many decisions during my training and along the way in my surgical career where I've been able to go to Laura and get her input and sometimes do things the way she advises me, and other times try it out my way first. You don't always listen to mentors right away but the good ones are patient and supportive! She has really been someone who has been instrumental in me figuring out my path in surgery.

Gurbani: If not surgery, then what?

Dr. Mukhtar: That's easy! I would be a flute teacher. I play the flute and was very serious about it for several years. I started playing when I was 9 years old. I was in high school band and then I was in orchestra in college and originally started college as a music major and taught lessons. I ended up switching to a music minor after I decided that I wanted to go to medical school and started doing all the pre-med courses. I definitely don't get to play as much anymore as I used to, but whenever the rare opportunity comes up, I enjoy it. So, I think I would enjoy being a flute teacher if not a surgeon.

Gurbani: What's one thing that you know now that you wish you had known during training?

Dr. Mukhtar: I had heard it before but didn't appreciate it enough: the days are long, but the years are short. That saying really resonates with me. It's surprising how residency seems like it's so long, but it really flies by. I guess there's two things:

(1) From a training perspective, it's important to extract as much from the training time as you can. Really approach each day as today I'm going to learn something that's going to help me take care of patients for the rest of my career. Thinking of training that way can help people maintain the stamina that's needed to get through it and keep your eye on the big picture.

(2) On the flip side, the same is true for your life outside of the hospital. The years really go by quickly. So, it's really important to not ignore the rest of your life and do things you enjoy and make sure you are taking care of yourself, exercising, and eating well as much as you can.

Gurbani: Speaking of life outside of the hospital. I saw you have a dog from one of the photos you shared with us. Can you please tell us about him and what you do to stay grounded/maintain wellness?

Dr. Mukhtar: I am totally obsessed with my dog. He's a Cavalier King Charles spaniel named Hamlet. I spend a lot of time with him like taking him on hikes, to the beach, and of course maintaining his Instagram Account: @Hammiethecavi. He's 6 and I got him shortly after I finished my training. He used to attend conference pre-Covid. I hope to reinstate bringing him to conference once that is possible again. I know I'm biased but people seemed to really like his presence! He's just adorable.

I love hiking and there are so many opportunities for it in the Bay Area. I recently started jogging again, but I'm not a fast jogger. A couple of the residents and I started what we call the "slow running club." On Thursday afternoons we jog together usually at Kezar stadium and sometimes in Golden Gate Park. I also love exploring different cuisines at new restaurants and am looking forward to being able to do that more again once things get back to normal.



The Muriel Steele Society is an inclusive community dedicated to inspiring, supporting, and promoting women surgeons so they can thrive at all stages of their careers. We will be hosting events throughout the year to foster a strong community of allies and to achieve the goal of continued excellence at UCSF.

All women surgeons or medical students interested in surgery are included in the society but we recognize that some women may have been inadvertently left out of these emails. Please

forward to anyone who you think might like to be included in the MSS. If you are interested in membership, please email us at themurielsteelesociety@ucsf.edu.

For more information about the Muriel Steele Society, please visit our [website](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

See what's coming up next on the [Muriel Steele Society's calendar of events](#).

Have an opportunity or event that you'd like to share with the MSS membership? Email us at themurielsteelesociety@ucsf.edu.

Want to become more involved with the Muriel Steele Society? We especially welcome women in other surgical departments to join our Executive Council! Email co-chairs Mika Varma (mika.varma@ucsf.edu) or Lucy Kornblith (Lucy.Kornblith@ucsf.edu) for more information.