



Reflections of the ABC travelling fellowship 2024

Maritz Laubscher, Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town, South Africa
 Anand Segar, Starship Hospital, Auckland, New Zealand
 Jonathan Stevenson, Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, Birmingham
 Sina Babazadeh, Australian Orthopaedic Association
 Xavier Griffin, Queen Mary and Barts Health, London
 Tom Quick, The Cleveland Clinic, London
 Ciara Stevenson, Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Calgary – Host Dr Mike Monument
 (ABC 2021)

Having recently completed the ABC tour himself, Dr Monument, with parenthood pending, showed kindness to our jetlag and allowed a slow start to recharge. We met Dr Richard Buckley (the first orthopaedic trauma surgeon in Calgary) who described how he became involved with AO Trauma and proceeded to co-author the peerless Hoppenfeld surgical exposures in orthopaedics.

On 2nd June 2024, seven surgeons from across the world assembled in London to represent their respective Orthopaedic Associations and embark on the ABC Travelling Fellowship. A dinner hosted by the Bone and Joint Journal, attended by previous ABC fellows Deborah Eastwood (ABC 1992), John Skinner (ABC 2004) and Fares Haddad (ABC 2004) provided entertaining stories of previous fellowships and set the expectations (of behaviour) for the coming tour. The following morning our group boarded the flight from Heathrow to Calgary full of excitement and nervous anticipation for the weeks ahead.

A leadership morning at the Cumming School of Medicine provided the opportunity to meet with Dr Todd Anderson (Dean of the School of Medicine), Dr Kevin Hildebrand (Head of Department of Surgery) and Dr Jason Werle (Senior Medical Director and Chief of orthopaedic surgery). We heard how departments were organised and problems solved within government-based systems with the usual inefficiencies and constraints and about their research program.

A tour of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health left us in awe of the philanthropic donations that provide state of the art facilities for clinical and academic research.

Our academic discussions continued with the Calgary Orthopaedic Resident Research Group (CORRG) led by Dr Prism Schneider (ABC 2025) timed perfectly with the PGY5 residents receiving their fellowship exam results that afforded us the opportunity to celebrate their success. We concluded our Alberta experience with a trip to Banff to avail of the breathtaking views and incredible hospitality of Calgary Orthopaedics.

Ottawa – Host Dr Sasha Carsen (ABC 2021)

We were met at the baggage carousel with Dr Carsen's infectious smile. What an incredible genuine and enthusiastic gentleman. He introduced us to Dr Baxter Willis, Past president of POSNA and previous Chief of Surgery at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) who humbly talked about his fellowship with Dr Salter and the importance of mentorship living by the ethos of 'pay it forward'. We attended trauma grand rounds chaired by Dr Steve Papp (Chief of Orthopaedics) which provided discussion of clinical cases and shared learning. A tour of the biomechanics lab taught us how collegiality within the department helped to fundraise for the Kuka robot to advance research. One of the highlights of the visit was being hosted for dinner at the Rideau Club as guests of Dr Paul Beaulieu with spectacular views of the Canadian Parliament.

Halifax - Canadian Orthopaedic Association meeting 12th – 15th June Dr Pierre Guy and Dr Olufemi Ayeni (Immediate past and current presidents)

We arrived at a drinks reception hosted in our honour where we had the opportunity to reconnect with our new



and longstanding Canadian friends. We each presented at the academic meeting and moderated various sessions which allowed us to debate, stimulate discussion and share learning from our own registries and research. Highlights of the meeting included dinner with the Carousel of Past Presidents – not only an opportunity to don black tie and enjoy a fine evening, but an incredible combined experience of leadership and clinical expertise.

Nashville – Dr Rick Wright, Chief of Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Vanderbilt Orthopaedics

Running the border and heading south to the music city of Nashville where we were treated to southern hospitality of brisket and bourbon. Impressed by the facilities of the Vanderbilt campus and general scale of the unit comprising 41 operating theatres, we witnessed efficiency and resource to facilitate running two theatres simultaneously. The academic programme provided insight on how to produce big data from the MOON group (Dr John Kuhn) and MARS (Dr Rick Wright). The highlight of this stop was the listening room café - with three amazing independent female singer song writers on stage.

St Louis - American Orthopaedic Association Annual Leadership meeting, Dr Ann Van Heest (President)

Our Midwest travelling fellowship continued to St Louis. Highlights of the meeting included symposia on residency programmes, providing us with insight into how the US training system operates and how the difficulties at home about selection and training are mirrored here. The standout presentation of the meeting was by Dr Rex Marco who gave a heartfelt reflection on the use of mindfulness to survive his journey from being a prominent successful spinal surgeon to suffering a tragic accident causing tetraplegia. We learnt perspective in St Louis. >>



Chicago – Hosts Dr Mike Lee (ABC 2019) and Dr Rex Haydon (ABC 2009)

The Windy City did not disappoint. We were taken on arrival for deep dish pizza and karaoke to celebrate the birthday of recently retired Professor of Orthopaedics, Dr Terry Light. The following day we saw Chicago from the river on an architecture boat tour followed by a Cubs game at Wrigley Park. Monday, we had the privilege of a private tour of the Institute for the study of Ancient Cultures Museum followed by our academic afternoon led by Dr Haydon. Our last night in Chicago was one we will never forget. Dr Haydon and his wife Nene hosted us at their family home on campus, where we celebrated the ABC legacy, sipped bourbon, ate delicious Peruvian food and watched the fireflies dance in the evening sky.

Memphis – Host Dr Derek Kelly (ABC 2019) Campbell Clinic

We made memories by staying at the Peabody hotel famous for its ducks in the fountain of the hotel foyer, taking a stroll down Beale Street and making our way to BB King's Blues Club – home of the blues. Trauma grand rounds at Regional One followed by a tour of Le Bonheur Children's Hospital demonstrated the devastating prevalence of paediatric ballistic trauma. Academic discussions provided insight into the rich history of the ABC association with Campbell Clinic, and we also had the opportunity to discuss how healthcare is funded in Tennessee with the CEO of Campbell Orthopaedics, Daniel Shumate. No visit to Memphis would be complete without a tour of Graceland and with our hearts full of music we made our way to Colorado.



Denver – Host Dr Evaline Burger (ABC 2000), Professor and Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine

We arrived for our last stop of the ABC tour in Denver as firm friends with a deep respect for each other's practice. Offering a unique blend of outdoor adventure and world class clinical and research facilities, UC Health was fitting of our

final destination. A particular highlight was an evening at Dr Jason Stoneback's (Consultant trauma surgeon) ranch, where he and his wife hosted traditional western education which included meeting a professional barrel racer, learning how to rope and ranch, clay pigeon shooting followed by a sunset meal from a 19th century chuck wagon. The morning of our departure we had breakfast with the Tom Gronow (CEO and President of UC Health) who gave us valuable insights into his leadership style how to promote cultural change within an organisation.

Conclusion

What is the point of the ABC travelling fellowship? Throughout the tour we were consistently overwhelmed by the generosity and enthusiasm of everyone involved in hosting the ABC fellows. Dr Stu Weinstein (ABC 1985) former president of the American Orthopaedic Association once said, "There is no greater return on investment for our profession than the ABC travelling fellowship." Spending five weeks with like-minded individuals who share the same commitment and drive for our profession has earned us not only six treasured friends but an international network for collaborative research, a sounding board for the exchange of innovative and transformational ideas and ultimately an ABC family bonded by this incredible life changing experience. ■

