



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we finish out the year, it is time to evaluate 2024 and plan for 2025. Although the past few months have been tumultuous in our country and around the world, the NREF continues to grow with the generous support of our members, industry partners and affiliated organizations.

The Foundation has created more opportunities to invest in neurosurgical education and research and has engaged more neurosurgeons to support our mission. We have collaborated with our industry partners to optimize access for our patients for appropriate procedures as well as provide the new technology that enables us to serve our patients.

We have created more directed donations to allow contributors to support the causes that are paramount to the NREF mission.

### **2024 in Review and Looking Ahead to 2025:**

- **Resident and Fellow Courses:** These free courses to active surgeons reflect the NREF and AANS commitment to returning the investment to our members. Under the direction of Education chair, **Mark Bain, MD, FAANS**, and his committee, we are planning more courses for the future, and would welcome input and suggestions regarding topics of interest, locations, and course format.
- **Clinical Fellowships:** With support from Globus Medical, Johnson & Johnson MedTech, LivaNova, MicroVention Terumo, Medtronic, and NuVasive, the NREF provided \$1.7M in support for clinical fellowships in spine, cerebrovascular, stereotactic & functional and tumor. Looking ahead to the new year, Fellowship chair, **Luis Tumialán, MD, FAANS**, and his committee members are focused on expanding this program to support other subspecialties.
- **Research Support:** The NREF granted over \$500,000 this past year for medical student, resident, fellow and post-graduate basic science grants, with support given by Sections and other organizations, such as the American Academy of Neurological Surgery and B\*CURED. In 2025, Research chair, **Gregory Zipfel, MD, FAANS**, and his committee are committed to broadening the reach of our grant programs.
- **Development: Honor Your Mentor Funds** are directed by Sections, institutional neurosurgical departments or self-selected committees. The NREF provides the infrastructure to assure donors of the necessary due diligence while allowing for control of disbursement by the Fund Managers. To date, there are 83 funds with over \$8.2M in pledges and over \$7.6M in collected donations from over 2,800 individuals and organizations. Most importantly, these funds have disbursed over \$2.5M in awards.

The **Cushing Circle of Giving** is the Foundation's donor recognition society. Since the 2024 AANS Annual Scientific Meeting in Chicago, we've seen an increase in the number of Cushing Level donors, each with pledges of \$25,000 or more. There are now 200 individual and 46 institutional Cushing Circle members representing over \$10 million in cumulative donations.

With leadership from chair, **Praveen Mummaneni, MD, FAANS**, the Development committee is planning exciting initiatives and partnerships in 2025.

And there's more: 2025-26 grant and fellowship award announcements will be made in the spring. The Van Wagenen Fellowship Committee is hosting their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual hockey tournament in January, and Columbia University will be hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament in June. You'll have an opportunity to visit with the NREF team and celebrate AANS President, Jacques J. Morcos, MD, FAANS during a dinner in his honor at the AANS Annual Scientific Meeting in Boston next May.

I want to express my gratitude for the culture of giving within the neurosurgical community. This is a team effort. Only by the cooperation and support of multiple people and organizations has the NREF continued to grow and build upon the concept of "The Research Foundation" first established in 1980.

I'm indebted to the NREF vice chair, **Michael Wang, MD, FAANS**, and a strong and highly engaged Board of Directors for all that they have poured into the mission. We have committee members who've given their time and talents to bring innovation to NREF endeavors, course directors and course faculty who bring energy, creativity and leading-edge techniques to our educational programs, and the grant and fellowship reviewers who bring their knowledge and expertise to evaluating applications in a competitive landscape.

Finally, we are most thankful to our donors. We appreciate your joining us in our efforts to **establish new relationships** and **strengthen existing collaborations** to create an environment that leads to greater opportunities for discovery.

To make a tax-deductible donation during this season of giving, please visit the secure NREF website and click **Donate** or contact the NREF team at [info@nref.org](mailto:info@nref.org) for more information on becoming a Cushing Circle of Giving member.

Thank you for your continued support of NREF!



Best wishes to you and yours for a safe and happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous New Year,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam S. Arthur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "S".

Adam S. Arthur, MD, MPH, FAANS  
NREF Chair

## [Cushing Circle of Giving Welcomes New and Elevated Members](#)



The **Cushing Circle of Giving** was established by the NREF as a lifetime giving society to recognize donors who support the Foundation's research and education efforts. The NREF extends its gratitude to: **Daniel M. Sciubba, MD, FAANS**, the newest philanthropist to have made a substantial commitment to the future of neurosurgery by joining the Cushing Circle, and to **J. Marc Simard, MD, PhD, FAANS**, the latest member to reach the Silver level. To become a member, visit our secure [Donate](#) page, email [info@nref.org](mailto:info@nref.org) or call 847.378.0500 for more information.

## [In Memoriam: Mark E. Shaffrey, MD, FAANS](#)



The NREF mourns the passing of **Mark E. Shaffrey, MD, FAANS** who passed away December 4, 2024 at the age of 63. A giant in the neurosurgical sphere, Dr. Shaffrey was the David Weaver Professor and Chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Virginia, where he made lasting contributions to neuro-oncology and spine research, including founding the Neuro-Oncology Center and advancing spine research through the QOD. Donations in memory of Dr. Shaffrey can be made by visiting the [Mark E. Shaffrey Honor Your Mentor Fund](#) page. All donations will support spine QOD efforts. Our deepest condolences go to his family, colleagues, and the UVA community. His wisdom, compassion, and contributions will leave an unforgettable impact.

## [In Memoriam: David G. Kline, MD, FAANS\(L\)](#)



The NREF mourns the passing of **David G. Kline, MD, FAANS(L)** who passed away September 20, 2024 at the age of 89. Renowned for his groundbreaking contributions to neurosurgery, Dr. Kline's career reshaped how nerve tumors are treated and injuries repaired, leaving an enduring legacy that has improved the lives of patients worldwide. Donations in memory of Dr. Kline can be made by visiting the [David G. Kline Wilson Honor Your Mentor Fund](#) page. All donations will support education and research in peripheral nerve.

## [In Memoriam: Chris A. Philips](#)



The NREF mourns the passing of our dear friend and colleague, **Chris A. Philips**, who passed away October 17, 2024. Chris joined the professional staff of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and would go on to become one of the longest-serving staff members in AANS history. She served the AANS with distinction from July 11, 1988 until her retirement as Director of Membership on July 31, 2020.

Donations in Chris' memory can be made by visiting the [Chris A. Philips/E2M Fund](#) page. All donations will advance medical student mentorship, research, education, and participation in organized neurosurgery, particularly students who would otherwise lack access.

## [NREF Success Story: Adi Mittal](#)



The NREF is proud to shine a light on past grant and fellowship recipients accomplishing great things. This month, we're featuring **Aditya Mittal** from the University of Pittsburgh, recipient of the 2022 NREF Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship. In the past two years, Adi and his mentor, **Kamil Nowicki, MD, PhD**, have been recognized by national institutions and received substantial additional funding. Learn more about Adi's Success Story [here](#).

## [NREF Honor Your Mentor Funds Announce Awards](#)

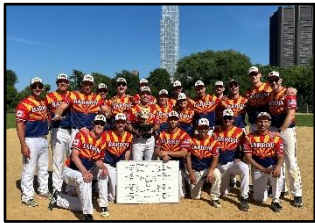
[Honor Your Mentor \(HYM\) Funds](#) recognize the incredible people who have advanced neurosurgery. Each mentor fund has a specific purpose, and donations fund a chosen research or educational endeavor in the mentor's name across a variety of subspecialties. The following HYM funds have recently made award disbursements: **Warren C. Boop**. NREF congratulates all award recipients and offers our best wishes for their continued success.

## [New Honor Your Mentor Funds Recognize Industry Leaders](#)



[Honor Your Mentor \(HYM\) Funds](#) celebrate the distinguished luminaries of neurosurgery: those who inspire, teach, and mentor by giving generously of their time and talent. The NREF is proud to announce these newly established funds: The [Ali A. Baaj Honor Your Mentor Fund](#) will provide grants to international medical students and trainees seeking research, training and educational opportunities in neurosurgery in the U.S; the [Damirez T. Fossett Honor Your Mentor Fund](#) will provide funding to students at HBCU medical schools to support educational opportunities in neurosurgery, residency applications and the interview process; the [Takanori Fukushima Excellence in Microsurgery Lecture Fund](#) has been established to recognize the highest scored microneurosurgery abstract at annual neurosurgery meetings with an invitation to make a presentation; the [Allan D. Levi Honor Your Mentor Fund](#) will provide tuition support for Neurosurgery Chief Residents to take the Goodman Oral Boards Course; the [Jacques J. Morcos Honor Your Mentor Fund](#) will support research in cerebrovascular or skull base neurosurgery or the investigation of neuroanatomy, by a resident or fellow; and the [Mark E. Shaffrey Honor Your Mentor Fund](#) will support spine QOD efforts.

## [Mark Your Calendar for 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Softball Tourney](#)



The [20<sup>th</sup> Annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament](#), hosted by Columbia University, will be held in New York City's Central Park on Saturday, June 7, 2025 to raise funds for brain tumor research. The tournament will feature an expanded field from across the U.S and Canada. For more information regarding the tournament, please contact Dr. Ricardo J. Komotar (rkomotar@med.miami.edu); or Dr. Jeffrey N. Bruce (jnb2@columbia.edu).

## [Enhance Your Neurosurgical Training with NREF](#)



The NREF is committed to providing early career neurosurgeons with access to relevant, leading-edge educational opportunities. Our free, [in-person courses](#) offer advanced resident and fellow educational training in topic areas not always covered within neurosurgical residency.

While spaces at the in-person courses are invitation-only, there are [courses and webinars](#) available online, free of charge, to neurosurgical residents around the world. All online courses and past episodes of NREF webinars are archived on the [NREF YouTube](#) channel.

## [How You Can Support NREF](#)



Make a difference in one minute. **Text "Neurosurgery" to 41444** from your mobile device or visit our online [Donate](#) page. Illuminate the world of neurosurgery with a contribution to NREF. Every donation helps fund cutting-edge research and educational programs to help develop the next generation of neurosurgeons provide the highest quality of patient care.

## [Van Wagenen Fellows Host 1st Annual Hockey Tournament](#)



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Van Wagenen Hockey Tournament**, hosted by Dr. Andrew Grande and former Van Wagenen Fellows, will be held January 26, 2025 at 3M Mariucci Arena in Minneapolis. The puck drops at 9am. Last year's inaugural event raised over \$18,000 for the Van Wagenen Fellowship Fund. [Click here](#) to register for this year's contest.

The [William P. Van Wagenen Fellowship](#) provides neurosurgical residents interested in studying abroad a unique opportunity with a program designed to give freedom in scientific development without the restrictive limitations imposed by many research grants and fellowships.