



# Newsletter

*Fall 2020*

## AHTF Mission and Vision

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**The mission of the American Hand Therapy Foundation is to improve patient outcomes by promoting evidence-based practice through funding clinical and scientific research and education.**

**Our vision is for all evaluation and treatment methods in hand and upper extremity therapy to be based on well documented evidence.**



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## Message from AHTF Chair



Greg Pitts, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, AHTF Chair

In today's ever-changing and complicated world driven by the current pandemic, the profession of hand therapy has continued to maintain its identity and value to the community recognized through our designation as essential providers. The essential provider status continues to be carried through the hand therapy profession's focus on providing treatment through science and research. I am happy to say that The Foundation continues to move forward, experiencing growth and providing quality research to sustain our current level of practice.

The Foundation was honored to receive a generous donation from Doris Ann Slack. Her contribution exceeded \$100,000, and a new fund was established to enhance the Foundation's current grants. The Doris Ann Slack donation has allowed the Foundation to reach a new milestone.

The Foundation continues to offer generous grants, with available funding exceeding \$75,000 on an annual basis. The newest initiative is a collaboration with the American Society for Surgery of the Hand. A \$20,000 grant has been established to allow the cooperation between a hand surgeon and hand therapist on a research project. This collaborative grant will increase communication and teamwork between the two organizations.

The significant level of funding and expansion of collaboration is due to the extreme talent and diversity of the Foundation's Board of Directors. These selfless professionals dedicate themselves to the enhancement of research and functional outcomes. They commit themselves to many hours and projects raising money, evaluating research proposals, awarding research grants, and tracking investigators' progress. The Foundations' Board of Directors' hard work and dedication have allowed substantial monetary growth enabling grants significant for the future of research.

In this election cycle, I am stepping down as chairman for the Foundation Board of Directors. It has been my privilege and honor to serve on such an outstanding board. The board has demonstrated the highest level of professional dedication in serving the hand therapy community. I know that the future of hand therapy will continue to grow and prosper with the strength of this unique select group. I am pleased to announce that Jim King will be the new chair of the American Hand Therapy Foundation. He has the vision and strength that is necessary to make research significant for the future of hand therapy.



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## AHTF Grants Committee Update 2020

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April Cowan, OTD, OTR, CHT, Director of Grants

The AHTF grants committee has worked hard to support our mission of improving patient outcomes and our vision of establishing a strong evidence base for all upper extremity evaluations and interventions. The granting infrastructure was reviewed, strengthened where needed, and expanded. We thank all whose efforts make this work possible!

The 2020 grant awarding cycle for the AHTF is now complete. All applications underwent rigorous peer review and the applicants received written compilations of the reviewer comments to support the funding decisions made. The hope is that applicants will use the feedback to further their research agendas and to consider making future applications for funding by the AHTF. The AHTF awarded the 2020 Burkhalter New Investigator Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to Emily S. Ho, PhD, MEd, OT Reg. (Ont.), and her colleagues Kristin Davidge, MD, Sevan Hopyan, PhD, MD, Andrew Price, MD, and Howard Clarke, PhD, MD for their project entitled "Musculoskeletal Characteristics of Elbow Flexion Contractures in Infants and Children with Brachial Plexus Injury." Dr. Emily S. Ho is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at the University of Toronto and a clinician-investigator in the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), Toronto, Canada. Her current research program centers on patient engagement and outcomes research in children and adolescents with upper extremity musculoskeletal conditions.



Emily Ho  
PhD, MEd, OTReg.(Ont.)



Pictured from left: Emily Ho (occupational therapist), Howard Clarke and Kristin Davidge (plastic surgeons), Alison Anthony and Karen Klar (physical therapists), and Sevan Hopyan (orthopedic surgeon)

Per Dr. Ho, "It is truly an honor to be the recipient of the AHFT Burkhalter New Investigator Award. As I embark on a career as an academic researcher, this award fuels my resolve to advance scientific evidence in upper extremity rehabilitation science to optimize functioning and quality of life of youth with upper limb conditions and their families. With the support of the Burkhalter award, our multidisciplinary research team in the SickKids Brachial Plexus program will investigate the muscular, joint, and osseous characteristics of elbow flexion contractures secondary to brachial plexus birth injury. This research will provide objective evidence to support proposed etiologies and the results will provide hand therapists working with this pediatric population a clear road map to discern optimal treatment modalities to address joint stiffness, muscle shortening, and/or muscle weakness associated with these contractures." <sup>3</sup>



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The AHTF board of directors wishes to thank the volunteers who served as expert peer reviewers for the Grant Application Review committee during the most recent grant cycle. The grant application reviews are a major undertaking that is made possible only by the efforts of each of the volunteers, both working individually and in concert as a team committed to reviewing, discussing, and making unbiased funding decisions in support of upper limb rehabilitation. Every single contribution made by every single team member made a difference and contributed to this year's success. *New funding opportunities* have arisen during the past year. The AHTF is excited to have partnered with the American Foundation for Surgery of the Hand for a collaborative research grant in the amount of \$20,000. The grant was offered as a one-time opportunity open to a hand surgeon/hand therapist team studying any hand/upper limb surgery or therapy topic. Applications were submitted in June of this year and are currently undergoing a peer review process. Stay tuned for more information about this exciting opportunity.

Another thrilling happening for the AHTF is the creation of the Doris Ann Slack Upper Extremity Education and Research Innovation Fund to support clinical innovations and education in the field of upper extremity rehabilitation in perpetuity.

Doris Ann Slack, a master clinician and educator whose life-long reverence for the hand and upper extremity profoundly benefited and equally inspired her patients and students. Her dedicated service to others is epitomized by this legacy gift to the American Hand Therapy Foundation. The Doris Ann Slack Fund is the bedrock that sustains the pre-existing AHTF grants, just as a teacher imparts the foundational knowledge that prepares future generations for research and advanced practice. Doris' selection of AHTF for this generous endowment is a genuine reflection of her desire to improve patient outcomes by promoting evidence-based practice. Simply stated, it is a perpetuation of her life's work and her admiration for the miraculous design and competence of the upper extremity.

Each year, the AHTF Board of Directors will designate proceeds from the Doris Ann Slack Fund toward additional funding of one of the AHTF existing grants to enhance evidence-based practice and improve patient outcomes. Currently under development is an educational program in conjunction with national upper extremity professional organizations (i.e., ASSH, ASHT, AAHS, APTA, AOTA) to disseminate evidence-based surgical and rehabilitative innovations to therapists that are deemed to directly enhance patient care.

**Thanks again to all volunteers, applicants, donors, grant committee members, and therapists creating and using evidence-based practice to help their patients flourish in their daily activities!**

**Have a project idea or a specific clinical need? Please consider applying for an AHTF research grant in the future. Details available at: <https://www.ahtf.org/grants/>.**



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## Celebrating AHTF'S First Legacy Gift

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**Doris Slack** was both a physical and occupational therapist whose life-long reverence for hand and upper extremity rehabilitation had influenced her choice of making a substantial gift in honor of her own 100-year-old birthday to AHTF. Doris's intention was to make a gift that will live in perpetuity.

Along with her family members, the AHTF board created the ***Doris Ann Slack Upper Extremity Education and Research Innovation Fund*** to capture her vision for supporting the Hand Therapy profession through enhancing an AHTF grant each year

The American Hand Therapy Foundation extends its gratitude to the Slack family, as this gift will truly enhance the ability for therapists to engage in meaningful research and educational activities in years to come.

Through this generous donation from Doris Ann Slack and her family the AHTF will be able to genuinely reflect her desire to improve patient outcomes by promoting evidence-based practice and thus honor her life's work.

Thank you to our past Chair **Bill Walsh** who introduced the work of the American Hand Therapy Foundation (AHTF) to Doris Ann Slack.

For more information about Doris Ann Slack, or to donate to the gift she gave our profession, please go to: [www.AHFT.org](http://www.AHFT.org)

**Have a project idea or a specific clinical need? Please consider applying for an AHTF research grant in the future. Details available at: <https://www.ahtf.org/grants/>.**





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## AHTF 2020 virtual “Happy Hour with a Scholar” October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7 pm – 8:30 pm EST

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Please join the AHTF board and co-sponsors on Thursday, October 22, 2020 for our annual “*Happy Hour with a Scholar*” event in conjunction with the ASHT 2020 virtual Annual Meeting.



The AHTF Board of Directors is pleased to honor Scott Kozin, MD as the AHTF’s 2020 Scholar, to present “When You Have Nothing, a Little is a Lot: Nerve Transfers in Distressed Patient Populations”.

“*Happy Hour with a Scholar*” has become AHTF’s signature fundraising event, honoring a Scholar in the field of hand therapy and surgery research. Past Scholar events have been a ticketed for attendees with a minimum donation of \$35/ticket. This year’s COVID-19 has created unprecedented hardships. With this in mind, the AHTF Board of Directors voted to open this event to all hand therapists and hand surgeons at no cost, to ease the pressure this pandemic has created.

**Our aim** is to have hand therapists and hand surgeons embrace this AHTF endeavor. **Our hope** is that if hand therapy and hand surgery colleagues support the foundation, it will encourage others to do the same. This effort will go towards fulfilling our **mission** which is to improve patient outcomes by promoting evidence-based practice through funding clinical and scientific research and education.

Your participation in this event provides you the opportunity to network with colleagues, engage with a fascinating Scholar, earn 1 CEU and support the future of the hand therapy profession. The AHTF is grateful for our co-sponsors and attendees. We welcome any of you who would like to co-sponsor (this can be an individual, a combination of individuals, business, university or association). You can see the level of donations below, please indicate that your gift is for the “scholar” event.

Click [HERE](#) to become a "Partner of AHTF"

**Sponsorship levels with their respective perks, are listed on the next page, although any amount is appreciated.**



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Proposed Sponsor Categories	Sponsor Perks
\$5000+ Principal Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognition at Scholar Event (written in program &amp; verbal)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo on AHTF Website under Scholar Event</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo recognition thru AHTF Social Media</li> <li>•Recognition in the AHTF Annual Report</li> </ul>
\$2500 – \$4999 Scholar Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognition at the Scholar Event (written in program &amp; verbal)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo on AHTF Website under Scholar Event (logo slightly smaller in size than the Principle Investigator)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo recognition thru AHTF Social Media</li> <li>•Recognition in the AHTF Annual Report</li> </ul>
\$1500 - \$2499 Academic Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognition at the Scholar Event (written in program &amp; verbal)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo on AHTF Website under Scholar Event (logo slightly smaller in size than the Scholar Circle)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo recognition thru AHTF Social Media</li> <li>•Recognition in the AHTF Annual Report</li> </ul>
\$1,000 - \$1499 Research Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognition at the Scholar Event (written in program &amp; verbal)</li> <li>•Name on AHTF Website under Scholar Event (logo slightly smaller in size than the Academic Circle)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo recognition thru AHTF Social Media</li> <li>•Recognition in the AHTF Annual Report</li> </ul>
\$500 - \$999 Mentor Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognition at the Scholar Event (written in program &amp; verbal)</li> <li>•Name on AHTF Website under Scholar Event (logo slightly smaller in size than the Research Circle)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo recognition thru AHTF Social Media</li> <li>•Recognition in the AHTF Annual Report</li> </ul>
\$250 - \$499 Explorer Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognition at the Scholar Event (written in program &amp; verbal)</li> <li>•Name on AHTF Website under Scholar Event (logo slightly smaller in size than the Mentor Circle)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo recognition thru AHTF Social Media</li> <li>•Recognition in the AHTF Annual Report</li> </ul>
\$150 - \$249 Partner of AHTF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recognition at the Scholar Event (written in program &amp; verbal)</li> <li>•Name on AHTF Website under Scholar Event (logo slightly smaller in size than the Explorer Circle)</li> <li>•Name &amp; Logo recognition thru AHTF Social Media</li> <li>•Recognition in the AHTF Annual Report</li> </ul>



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## The American Hand Therapy Foundation Research and Education Survey is coming your way!

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For the AHTF Board of Directors: Caroline W. Jansen, PT, PhD, CHT, April C. Cowan, OTR, OTD, CHT, Elaine Fess, OTR, OTD, CHT, FAOTA, Marsha Lawrence, PT, DPT

The mission of the AHTF is to improve patient outcomes by promoting evidence-based practice through funding clinical and scientific research and education. *"A clinical profession is built on frameworks of theory and research that define the nature of the profession and the specific methods it uses to accomplish its unique mission."*

Keeping with this concept, in October, all members of the American Society of Hand Therapists and all current Certified Hand Therapists will receive an important AHTF 2020 Research Questionnaire via email. The questionnaire is designed to survey stakeholders' perceptions of opportunities to create and utilize research, as well as perceptions of educational needs.

The AHTF wants to hear from clinicians, educators, and researchers about funding priorities for research, scientific workforce training, and clinical education. Input will initially be gathered through the electronic 2020 questionnaire, and in early 2021, via web-based focus groups. We are seeking responses from therapists with all levels of practice experience, all levels of scientific experience, and from all types of practice settings. All responses are important!

Feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns:  
Caroline W. Jansen (cjansen@ahtf.org)

\*\* MacDermid, JC, Fess, EE, Bell-Krotoski, J, et al; American Hand Therapy Foundation. A research agenda for hand therapy. *J Hand Ther.* 2002;15(1):3-15.





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## A Surgeon's Perspective

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Michael Epstein  
MD, Board Member

*The Mission of AHTF is to improve patient outcomes by providing evidence-based practice through funding clinical and scientific research and education.*

What better way is there to accomplish this mission than by providing the means for this collaborative research between Hand Therapists and Hand Surgeons? A team approach. Thus, in December of 1989, the formalization of the American Hand Therapy Foundation became a reality.

Over these years, many collaborative studies have been funded. In addition, at the setting of the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Hand Therapists, a very popular session, underwritten by AHTF, *Happy Hour with a Scholar*, is held in the evening. Past notable hand surgeon speakers have included:

Peter Amadio, MD 2015  
Roy Meals, MD 2017  
Lee Osterman, MD 2019  
Scott Kozin, MD 2020

From the perspective of a hand surgeon, the end result of improved outcomes for our patients contributed to by funded research done by Hand Therapists individually or in collaboration with Hand Surgeons, makes this endeavor by AHTF most worthwhile.



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## AHFT Volunteer Opportunities

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Jim King, OTR, PhD, CHT  
AHTF Vice Chairman

Bring your enthusiasm and help a great cause – get some great experience and a lot of friends.

The American Hand Therapy Foundation's mission is to improve patient outcomes by promoting evidence-based practice through funding clinical and scientific research and education.

For over 30 years, AHTF has been focused on raising money and administering grants to support research in hand and upper extremity rehabilitation. The Foundation is totally unique: the only Foundation in the world dedicated solely to promoting and supporting research that benefits the hand and upper extremity rehab community. AHTF grants have grown in number and value. Currently, seven grants with awards totaling up to \$75,000 are available on an annual basis. Many of you have supported the foundation through donations and by promoting the Foundation's grants with colleagues seeking research assistance. Thank you! Now, another opportunity to help AHTF achieve its vision arises.

As AHTF has grown, so too has its needs for volunteers to assist in the two major functions of the Foundation's board: fund raising and grant management. We are currently seeking volunteers to help with the Foundation's fund-raising events and administering its grants. You only need to be enthusiastic and responsive to be a volunteer for AHTF. Volunteers are welcome for short-term tasks and long-term projects and committees. We have needs for experienced and novice contributors. Do you have an interest in reviewing grants, an expertise in social media, connections with vendors or corporate donors? Perhaps you just want to get involved and grow your circle of friends in the field.

I want to personally invite you to be an AHTF volunteer with this thought: I have been volunteering for ASHT, HTCC, and AHTF (the hand therapy "Tri-Alliance) for 38 years. I started by volunteering for an ASHT fund raising committee and could not have felt more welcome. My fondest memories and many of my best friends have come from volunteering for these organizations. I have grown personally and professionally, developed leadership skills, and enjoyed a powerful sense of accomplishment. As soon as you step up, you'll find some wonderful people ready to accept you. You'll always get more than you give with this organization.



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## **AHTF Holiday Gift Virtual Auction Benefitting Hand Therapy Research November 27 – December 12, 2020.**

Support AHTF and at the same time do your holiday shopping.

Please make plans to:

1. Participate through donations of items to the AHTF's virtual silent auction.

To contribute an item: Please send **a photo**, a brief description and value of your donation to [efess@ahtf.org](mailto:efess@ahtf.org) by November 20, 2020.

**Any item is welcomed.**

2. Participate as a bidder for items at the AHTF's virtual silent auction (More information to come).

All proceeds from the auction will be used to administer and fund AHTF grants that support research and education in Hand Therapy.

For more information on how to donate and how to bid for gifts please go to: <https://www.ahtf.org/ahtf-holiday-gift-virtual-auction/>.

**Let's honor our friends and family during the holidays while also contributing to our profession by "shopping" to support AHTF!**



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## Your Donation Matters

Do you wonder how adults self-manage after a distal radius fracture? Or what is the effect of scapular muscle strengthening on functional recovery of lateral epicondylitis? Or do you just want to know how to dynamically stabilize the first CMC?

GOOD scientific research is expensive. Research and education is the bedrock of our Hand Therapy profession. It is what gives us the tools to help our patients. To educate our patients.

The AMERICAN HAND THERAPY FOUNDATION (AHTF) was created for the sole purpose of funding research and education to answer questions as above. **Every penny counts. Every donation makes a difference.** If 6000 hand therapists gave \$20 a year to the foundation, we would be able to fund all of our current grants PLUS so much more to support our mission.

AHTF has created many ways in which one can give so that each person can support the foundation in their special and individual way. You have options to “*Run With Friends*” go to “*Happy Hour With a Scholar*” or go “shopping for gifts” or just donate to honor or memorialize someone that matters. Those who prefer, can do a legacy gift through their will. **Every penny counts. Every donation makes a difference.**

The Foundation is run by therapists for their patients' well-being. The more we know the more effectively we can treat. **Every penny counts. Every donation matters.**

To donate, go to: <https://www.ahtf.org/donations/donate/>



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## Meet the new AHTF Board Members 2020 Gretchen Bachman

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Gretchen Bachman is an OT/CHT from Phoenix, Arizona. She earned her B.S. in Occupational Therapy from Saginaw Valley State University in 1998. She started her career in Prescott, Arizona, and slowly gravitated to hand therapy, ultimately landing in Phoenix just a few years later when she found her hand therapy mentor.

Gretchen continued her education and earned her Master's in Business Administration and Health Care Management and a Post-Professional Doctorate Degree as a part of the Upper Extremity Track from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions in 2007. Somewhere in there, she earned her CHT! Gretchen has practiced clinically, managed, and helped start hand therapy programs in various outpatient settings, but now is full-time faculty for the Occupational Therapy Program at Northern Arizona University, located on the Phoenix Biomedical Campus.

She has served on both the Board of Directors for the American Society of Hand Therapists (ASHT) and the American Association of Hand Surgery. She has served on research, education, awards, and international committees with ASHT and the education committee with the International Federations of Societies for Hand Therapy. She has presented and published in varying arenas and currently serves as a peer reviewer for the Open Journal of Occupational Therapy. Gretchen joined the American Hand Therapy Foundation Board in September 2019.

Gretchen values deeply her involvement with The Guatemala Healing Hands Foundation (GHHF) and her role as a preceptor with the Street Medicine Phoenix Project, a student-driven interprofessional health care and social justice team consisting of students and faculty primarily from the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University. She also volunteers with her family with refugee organizations and with programs assisting those who are marginalized and underserved in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area.

In her spare time, Gretchen enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, camping, reading, and enjoying all of the Southwest's outdoor recreation possibilities!





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## Meet the new AHTF Board Members 2020

### Marsha Lawrence

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Marsha Lawrence earned her B.S. in Physical Therapy from the University of Illinois Medical Center in Chicago in 1978 and began her career at the University of Chicago, where she specialized in wound care and rehabilitation following thermal injuries. She learned orthosis fabrication through trial and error (we only had orthoplast!), using bent hangers for outriggers and prowling hardware and fabric stores for “splint components” and toy stores for “exercise equipment”.

Working with burn and frostbite injuries led to a focus on hand rehabilitation. She relocated to Washington and worked in pulmonary P.T. at George Washington University Hospital (down the street from the White House) but decided hand rehabilitation was her true calling and transferred to the Curtiss National Hand Center in Baltimore. She earned her CHT in 1991 and her DPT from Arcadia University in PA in 2017. She has practiced in a variety of locations including Duke University Medical Center, the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, Fallon Health Care in Worcester, MA, private practice in Overland Park, KS and most recently, the University of Iowa.

She completed Pilates training through Polestar in 2011 and incorporated these skills and equipment into upper extremity rehabilitation. She authored “Orthopedic Management of the Wrist and Hand “ in Fundamental Orthopedic Management for the Physical Therapist Assistant, in 2011, 2016, and has recently submitted an update for an upcoming edition; co-authored a clinical practice guideline for conservative management of carpal tunnel syndrome and “Therapists management of nerve compressions at the wrist” in the Seventh edition of Rehabilitation of the Hand. Marsha has presented at ASHT, APTA CSM and for regional Hand Therapy Associations on a variety of topics ranging from wound care to advocacy and policy regulation. Marsha presently serves as the payment and practice chair of the APTA Hand Academy and also as their Federal Affairs Liaison. She is a member of the APTA Public Policy and Advocacy Committee. Working with national policy has reinforced her determination to support research demonstrating efficacy of hand therapy for upper extremity injuries and conditions and she was excited to join the AHTF Board in late 2019. In her spare time, Marsha stays connected to her Chicago roots where both of her sons live; is a die-hard fan of the Chicago Cubs; and closer to home, continues to support the Kansas City Symphony where she sang with the Symphony Chorus for 16 years. She continues to study voice (virtually) and is hoping to resume once the PHE has resolved!



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- 3-4. AHTF Grants Committee Update 2020
5. Celebrating AHTF'S First Legacy Gift
- 6-7. Virtual Happy Hour with a Scholar
8. Research and Education Survey
9. A Surgeon's Perspective
10. Volunteer Opportunities
11. Holiday Gift Virtual Auction
12. Your Donation Matters
- 13-14. Meet the new AHTF Board Members
15. AHTF Board of Directors 2020

**Greg Pitts**  
OTD, OTR/L, CHT

**James W. King**  
OTR, PhD, CHT

**Gary Solomon**  
MBA, MS, OTR/L, CHT

**Elaine Fess**  
OTD, OTR, CHT, FAOTA

**April C. Cowan**  
OTR, OTD, CHT

**Caroline W. Stegink Jansen**  
PT, PhD, CHT

**Dorit Aaron**  
OTR, MA, CHT, FAOTA

**Gretchen L. Bachman**  
OTD, OTR/L, MBA/HCM, CEAS, CHT

**Michael Epstein**  
MD

**Marsha Lawrence**  
PT, DPT, CHT

**Kim McVeigh**  
MBA, OTR/L, CHT

**Barbara Winthrop**  
OTR, MA, CVE, CHT, FAOTA