

Our Team

Founders

Awori J. Hayanga, MD, MPH (Chair)

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Awori J. Hayanga, MD, MPH is a Cardiothoracic transplant surgeon training in the United States. Born and raised in Kenya, he left Africa to pursue a medical education. After medical school in Europe, he moved to the United States to begin surgical training at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital before transferring to the University of Michigan and University of Washington for further surgical and specialty training. Acutely concerned by the relative isolation facing Kenyan surgery residents regarding access to and use of the evidence-base, he is committed to an earnest attempt at bridging the technological and practice divide using the world's most valuable resource - people. In this case, academic professionals from both sides who are willing to network and practice together, and in so doing, perpetuate the very essence of a global academic teaching institution without prejudice or restriction. Dr Hayanga's concern for environmental issues finds an outlet as he remains an active member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Environmental Studies. In 2007, Dr Hayanga was awarded the Alfred Sommer Fellowship by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health for a Master of Public Health with a focus on Health Policy. He was named a World Health Organization/World Alliance Patient Safety Scholar, was the recipient of the 2007 American College of Surgeons Resident Leadership award, the 2008 American Medical Association Leadership award and the 2009 American College of Surgeons Humanitarian award. Dr Hayanga served as a Health and Human Services (HHS) Fellow as Senior Medical Advisor to the Deputy Secretary in Washington, DC and is currently a board member of the National Resident Match Program (NRMP).

Suzanne W. Gitata

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Suzanne W. Gitata, a graduate of Nottingham University Law School (U.K.), co-founded RJW because, in her words, "it was time to stop talking and take action" to begin the journey that would allow us to transform lives. The daughter of Kenya's first female dentist, she has seen firsthand the impact an individual can have on a community. As a believer in the adage of teaching a man to fish, she was also part of a grassroots movement at the age of 15 called the Youth Network Center that involved peer to peer training about HIV prevention and AIDS through the auspices of Kenya Anti-Rape Organization. A founding board member, she lives in Los Angeles, where she practices financial planning as a private wealth manager. She serves on the board of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Young Professionals, Los Angeles Chapter. An alumni board member of Common Cause Georgia, Women's Policy Group and International Club of Atlanta she brings to RJW board experience, a deep belief and clear vision of what the Foundation can accomplish.

Board Members

Andrew L. Owiti (Executive Director)

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Andrew L. Owiti was born in Nairobi, Kenya, where he attended St. Mary's School from 1st through 12th grades. At 18 he won a scholarship to the United World College of the Atlantic in Cardiff, Wales, where he earned the International Baccalaureate Diploma. He then won another scholarship to Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and Music in 1998. Between 1999 and 2003, he worked on various performing arts ventures in New York and Washington, DC, including the composition of an original musical, "The White Picket Fence", and starring in the independent film, "Standalone". He then attended the Georgetown University Law Center, earning a Juris Doctor in 2004 and worked as an attorney in Philadelphia concentrating his practice in pharmaceutical litigation. Andrew is currently working full time for the Foundation. In 2008 Andrew earned a Certificate in Finance and Accounting from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Thomas E. Keane, MD

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Thomas Keane MD is a Chicago native who graduated with degrees in mechanical engineering and English Literature from the University of Illinois. After working as a business consultant for Ernst & Young, he completed an MD at Albany Medical College, a surgery internship at Johns Hopkins, a radiology residency at New York Presbyterian Cornell, and a vascular-interventional fellowship at Johns Hopkins, where he was the chief fellow. He has served as a clinical assistant professor at Johns Hopkins, as Senior Medical Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Health & Human Services, and is currently a voting member of the US Council for Graduate Medical Education (www.cogme.gov) in Washington, DC. He is a practicing interventional radiologist who specializes in providing care to rural and underserved populations

Matthew J McGirt, MD

Matthew McGirt MD is an Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery and the Director of Clinical Research in the Department of Neurosurgery at Vanderbilt University. Dr. McGirt specializes in the surgical treatment of spine tumors, trauma, and complex spinal reconstruction for adult and pediatric spinal deformity. His research on spine disease primarily focuses on clinical outcomes and cost-utility research. Dr. McGirt has published over 130 papers and given over 100 podium presentations at National medical meetings. He has been awarded over a dozen research grants and has received six awards from national neurosurgery societies including the Galbraith Cerebrovascular Award, Synthes Brain Trauma Award, Augustus

McCravey Award, Julius Goodman Socioeconomic Award, Ronald Bitner NeuroOncology Award, and the Larson Spinal Disorders Award for his advancements in Neurosurgery and Spine Research. Dr. McGirt is currently working with the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health to established the first exchange program between Neurosurgery training programs in the U.S. and East Africa.

Sonia Eden, MD

Sonia V. Eden, MD is a neurosurgeon at Neurosurgery of Kalamazoo, part of the Borgess Brain and Spine Institute, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. A native of Detroit, Michigan, Dr. Eden majored in Mechanical Engineering and earned her Bachelor of Science Degree from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Returning to her home state, she pursued her medical degree at the University of Michigan and completed her residency training in Neurological Surgery. Dr. Eden acquired additional training in minimally invasive spinal surgery at the Semmes-Murphey Clinic in Memphis, Tennessee.

Dr. Eden's research interests have primarily focused on racial and socioeconomic disparities in healthcare and the surgical management of sacroiliac joint dysfunction. Possessing a passion for providing access to healthcare for the underserved, Eden believes bridging the health care gap is the key to global survival. By participating in mission trips to Kenya, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic, Dr. Eden hopes to continue mission work throughout her career. The reward, she says, is in sharing her expertise and experience with those who need it most. She also believes in mentoring close to home by encouraging teens to pursue careers in math and science. Dr. Eden volunteers at her community YWCA mentoring at-risk girls. "If I can inspire just one student to reach for the stars, then I've been truly successful."

Advisory Panel

Heather K. Hayanga MDMPH

Information Coming Soon

John L. Tarpley, MD

Johns L. Tarpley, MD, FACS, FWACS, is the program director of the Vanderbilt General surgery Residency Program in Nashville, TN. He trained at the Johns Hopkins Hospital where he completed his surgical residency. He received the ACS Surgical Volunteerism Award for his international work serving the medically underserved population of Nigeria. Dr. Tarpley has provided surgical services during volunteer medical expeditions to Nigeria over the course of 28 years in collaboration with his partner Donald Meier, MD, FACS, FWACS. In making these trips, he has provided surgical and medical training to numerous Nigerians and has been dedicated to improving the health care system in that country. Dr. Tarpley's efforts encourage many fellow faculty members, residents, and medical students to join him in his humanitarian efforts. His work in Nigeria is based on equalized health care and health care education

in the country and has provided humanitarian opportunities for American physicians and nurses who have traveled there to provide health care to patients and training to Nigerian physicians and surgeons.

Akbar Waljee, MD, MSc

Akbar Waljee was born and raised Nairobi, Kenya. He spent many years volunteering with the Kenya Red Cross, and at Kenyatta Hospital where his interest in medicine and gastrointestinal diseases flourished. Akbar graduated from Emory University with Bachelor of Science in Biology and his Doctor of Medicine. He completed his internal medicine residency training at the University of Michigan, and spent a year as faculty. He has since completed a Gastroenterology fellowship at the University of Michigan with an interest in inflammatory bowel disease. During his fellowship, he was awarded his Masters of Science in Health and Health Services Research. He currently serves as faculty at the University of Michigan.

Officer

Ted James, MD

Ted A. James, MD, FACS is a surgical oncologist and Director of Undergraduate Surgical Education at the University of Vermont. He received his undergraduate training at McGill University, and his medical degree from Drexel University- Medical College of Pennsylvania. He completed a general surgery residency at North Shore University Hospital followed by a surgical oncology fellowship at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Dr. James has been involved in the American College of Surgeons and served as immediate past Chair of the Resident and Associate Society.

Dr. James has served as Cancer Committee Chair at his local institution, Cancer Liaison Physician to the National Commission on Cancer, and as a member of the Board of Directors for the New England Division of the American Cancer Society. He is active in clinical and outcomes research; including studying quality measures in cancer care. He is involved in overseas surgical missions, and has worked closely with organizations to address issues related to healthcare advocacy and patient education. Dr. James was recently awarded with the Commission on Cancer Award for outstanding performance for his work promoting quality of cancer care. He has contributed numerous publications to the medical literature and holds an academic appointment at the University of Vermont.

Malaika Awori – Gunther

Malaika was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya. She moved to Montral, Quebec, Canada in 2001 for further education. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry with Great Distinction at McGill University in Montral. She is currently working as a research scientist in the pharmaceutical industry in Montral. Malaika hopes to pursue a career in medicine (specializing in obstetrics/gynaecology) and has a dream to improve the health care of women. In addition, she aspires to bridge the gap in care in African countries where access to care in the rural areas is limited and the number of fetal-maternal deaths is amongst the highest in the world She joined RJW in the hopes of

contributing towards improving surgical care of women who experience complications during pregnancy and/or labor. She also hopes to create awareness amongst pregnant women concerning how to better take care of their health and how to identify life-threatening complications that warrant medical intervention.

RJW Health Policy Scholars

Jonathan K Aboagye MD, MPH

Jonathan K Aboagye MD, MPH is a recent graduate from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He was born in Kumasi, Ghana. A quest to save lives motivated him to pursue medicine after losing his sister to sickle cell disease at age 13. Inspired by his family, and by dint of hard work, he received a medical degree from the University of Ghana Medical School in 2009. While in medical school, he was involved in several local and national health campaigns. Working as an intern at Ghana's premier hospital, he was disturbed by the preventable deaths he witnessed, most importantly among women and children. He also witnessed firsthand, the devastating effects of non-communicable diseases like cancer. These fueled his interest in clinical research, with focus on clinical outcomes and the emergence of cancer in developing countries. In 2011 he received The Alfred Sommer Scholarship to pursue a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, with a concentration in epidemiology and biostatistics. He had the opportunity of receiving mentorship at the Center for Surgical Trials and Outcomes Research at Johns Hospital while studying for his MPH. He was inducted into the Alpha Chapter of the Delta Omega Society for Public Health in 2012. He is interested in health policy and believes that sound policies are born through quality research.

Oluseyi Aliu, MD

Oluseyi Aliu is a plastic surgery trainee at the University of Michigan Medical School. He was born in Lagos Nigeria where he lived until he emigrated to the United States in 1997. He graduated magna cum laude from Rollins College with a BA in biochemistry and molecular biology where he achieved numerous awards for academic excellence. He went on to attend medical school at Baylor College of Medicine in the Texas Medical Center during which he took a year off to study diet associated etiologies for calcium deficiency rickets in Northern, Nigeria. He graduated from Medical school in 2007 and subsequently began his plastic surgery residency training. His interest in health policy is heavily influenced by the challenges in health care availability and delivery experienced in developing economies.

Cedric V Pritchett, MD, MPH

Cedric V Pritchett MD, MPH is an Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery resident at the University of Michigan. His journey in medicine actually began as a mid-level provider, as he worked for several years as a physician assistant in the Department of Emergency at the University of Cincinnati. Inspired by his physician colleagues, and fueled by a desire to be more involved and responsible for the direction of healthcare in his community, he pursued advanced training. It was during his time at the Ohio State University (OSU), where he completed his MD degree and a MPH with emphasis in Clinical Investigation, that his appreciation for health policy deepened. Having worked or trained in numerous institutions, he is intrigued with healthcare organizations and the cultures unique to them. Dr Pritchett's interests have led to various leadership opportunities early in his career and training including serving on the Executive Self-Study Steering Committee of the Physician Assistant Program at his alma mater, Kettering College of Medical Arts; President of Alpha Omega Alpha, Gamma Chapter of Ohio; and Program Director for MD Camp, a Summer enrichment program designed to foster maximal exposure for underrepresented minority youth in the central Ohio and surrounding regions. He has been the recipient of numerous merit awards and service honors, including the OSU Board of Trustees Student Recognition Award and the OSU College of Medicine Deans Award. In 2006 he completed a research fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, and in 2007 he was a Ruth L Kirschstein National Research Service Award Fellow at the Ohio State University.

Shawn Hervey-Jumper, MD

Shawn Hervey-Jumper is a native of Boston Massachusetts and attended Oakwood University followed by medical school at the Ohio State University College of Medicine, graduating magna cum laude. He is a neurosurgeon in training at the University of Michigan and has achieved numerous academic, research, and teaching awards including the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honors society, Landacre research Honors society, Phi Kappa Phi honors society, National Scholars Honor Society, and the Arnold G. Coran teaching award. His clinical and research interests are in the development of novel therapeutics for the treatment of malignant central nervous system tumors, the delivery of oncologic care to diverse populations, and in healthcare policy. He has numerous scientific publications and has authored several book chapters. With a commitment to community health and injury prevention he narrated and appeared in *Shattered Dreams* a diving injury prevention video which was the recipient of 3 national awards including the 2009 Cine Golden Eagle award and the 2010 Telly Award. Throughout his journey, Dr Hervey-Jumper has recognized the influence that quality education and mentorship has had in his life. He recently co-founded *STAT-- Residents in the Classroom*, a program aimed at supporting the local underfunded public education system through providing direct assistance to science, math, and technology teachers.

Jingyan Yang

Jingyan Yang is a senior biostatistician in the Department of Health, Behavior and Society at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her research areas focus on longitudinal data analysis, multilevel modeling and advanced survival analysis. She has applied those statistical methodologies to various research topics, including HIV-aging related cognitive decline, tobacco control and prevention, injection drug use and social stigma, etc. As a Health & Society fellow, Jingyan plans to use her interdisciplinary background to explore the relationship of smoking on renal dysfunction over time after

lung transplantation. Ms. Yang received a B.A. with honors in Health Policy and Management from Hangzhou Normal University in China. Also, she received her Master of Health Science (MHS) degree in epidemiology from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Dr. Cong-Zhen Qiao

Dr. Cong-Zhen Qiao received his M.D. with honors from Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine in China. He is currently obtaining his Ph.D. training in Benedict R. Lucchesi laboratory in the department of pharmacology at the University of Michigan Medical School. One strand of his research concerns is to study the effect of atorvastatin in cardiac muscle function due to the fact that statin inhibits the mevalonate synthesis pathway to reduce the cholesterol synthesis. Mevalonate is also the precursor of Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), inhibition of which may lead to a deficit of CoQ10 within mitochondria, causing a tremendous decrease of energy fuel ATP. The lack of ATP impairs cardiac function and contributes to pre-exist cardiovascular diseases, such as heart failure. Dr. Qiao is also interested in clinical analysis of outcome in post-transplant patients. As a Health & Society fellow, he aims to bring his skills to investigate the risk factors associated with renal dysfunction after heart transplantation, as emerging attention caught by the field that renal failure is one of the leading causes of organ transplantation associated death.

Ground Logistics and Operations

Joshua Lwala

Joshua Lwala worked for Kenya Breweries Ltd from 1990 to 1995 as a Depot Manager overseeing resources worth over Kshs 100 Million and 1996 to 1999 as a sales Representative in various parts of Kenya, 2000 to 2001 as Area Sales Manager in charge of Western Kenya managing seven Sales Representatives and 24 beer distributors. He joined Grand/Laico Regency Hotel in 2002 to date as Sales and Marketing Executive and Sales Account Manager respectively in charge of both corporate, NGOS and International Organizations market segments. He is currently pursuing a B.COM (Marketing Option) at the University of Nairobi. His vision for RJW Foundation is to ensure that the medical team receive the most efficient and effective logistics to provide them with most conducive environment to carry out their professional and philanthropic duties.

Administrator

Heather K. Hayanga, MDMPH

More Information Coming Soon

