

Prof. Keith Naunheim: a good mentor inspires you, motivates you, polishes you

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Expert's introduction

Keith Naunheim, MD, is a professor in the Department of Surgery, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, at Saint Louis University School of Medicine and the director of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery.

He provides surgical treatment of all non-cardiac chest organs with both open and minimally invasive procedures, using minimally invasive laparoscopic and thoracoscopic techniques in his work. Dr. Naunheim is interested in research that investigates benign esophageal disease, health policy, and coding and reimbursement issues.

Dr. Naunheim is a past director of the American Board of Thoracic Surgery and past president of the Southern Thoracic Surgical Society. He currently serves as president of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons and a board member of the Thoracic Surgery Foundation.

Editor's notes

The 26th European Conference on General Thoracic Surgery (ESTS) was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 27th to 30th May 2018, celebrating 25 years of constant presence, growth and strength in the Thoracic Surgical Fraternity. Renowned speakers, as well as junior surgeons at the annual meeting were immersed into a four-day agenda that included: clinical and surgical management of patients, education, training and credentialing of thoracic surgeons worldwide.

During the conference, Prof. Keith Naunheim, from Saint Louis University School of Medicine, chaired a session regarding Life Cycle of a Surgeon. Seizing this opportunity, the Editorial Office of *Annals of Esophagus (AOE)* was honored to do an interview with Prof. Keith Naunheim, to share his opinions regarding mentorship (Figure 1).

In the interview, when talking about current mentorship relationship in the United States, Prof. Naunheim



Figure 1 Photo with Prof. Keith Naunheim.

mentioned that currently, there are just under 100 training programs and 130 trainees per year in the specialty of cardiothoracic surgery. Each of these trainees will find ideal mentors in his or her training program. Meanwhile, he emphasized the importance of partnering up with senior surgeons when young trainees choose their mentors. Because senior surgeons can provide better guidance in the performance of surgery, management of stress during residency, and career planning.

“To be a successful surgeon, you need to dedicate and sacrifice your time,” said Prof. Naunheim. *“Surgeons spend lifetimes trying to hone their practice. Be prepared to study. It requires a huge dedication and time management skills to the craft of surgery.”*

“When I look at the accomplished residents that I’ve taught, I’m very proud. They have done outstanding work and are committed to excellence in the field.” Prof. Naunheim smiled, *“I think that most academic surgeons would agree that through teaching we could pass wisdom and knowledge to the young generation which is the most valuable legacy we could leave behind.”*

At the end of our interview, Prof. Naunheim shared with us his upcoming plans in work and in life. As president of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, he wants to be active in cardio thoracic surgical field with continuous contribution not only for the members of the association



Figure 2 Prof. Keith Naunheim: a good mentor inspires you, motivates you, polishes you (1).

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/25987>

but for the patients. In life, he plans to retire in the next few years, spending more time with his family and traveling the world.

Interview questions

- (I) Would you like to introduce yourself briefly to our readers?
- (II) Would you like to talk about the current mentorship relationship in your country?
- (III) In your view, what is important when training medical professionals?
- (IV) Is there a particular achievement you are most proud of in your career so far?
- (V) What would you like to do in the upcoming years both in life and in work?

Let's enjoy the video (*Figure 2*)!

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the editorial office of *Annals of Esophagus (AOE)*, we would like to extend our gratitude to Prof. Naunheim for sharing his pearls of wisdom with us.

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1. Yuan M, Wang J. Prof. Keith Naunheim: a good mentor inspires you, motivates you, polishes you. *Asvide* 2018;5:632. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/25987>

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