

UCSF PATHOLOGY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 10: DECEMBER 2020

Remembering Another Epidemic by Linda Ferrell, MD, Professor Emerita

In June or July 1981, I was the pathologist who received and evaluated the first biopsy at UCSF from a patient dying of AIDS. I was either in the first month of my faculty appointment after in my third year of AP at UCSF as the first and only Surgical Pathology Fellow, as well as the only Chief Resident, but regardless, I still in charge of the cutting room as gross room supervisor when the sample arrived. I only remember a few aspects of my first encounter with AIDS in the cutting room. As I recall, a day or two before this occurred, as well as on the day the first specimen arrived in our gross room at Parnassus, I was likely visited by Dr. Paul Volberding in Infectious Disease and Dr. Don Ganem in Virology, both who were clinicians who throughout this epidemic who often visited pathology to keep us updated about these patients. They warned me that our gross room would soon likely receive a lung biopsy from our first UCSF patient with similar symptoms to the gay men recently seen in NYC. Those patients were severely immunocompromised and presented with an unusual type of pneumocystis pneumonia. When the lung biopsy arrived for a frozen section, I remember I was wearing my usual daily attire of a blue “scrubs” dress (...And YES, they had dresses that women could wear at that time...). I also had on gloves, but no mask. I personally cut the frozen (without a mask), assisted by Mr. Mert Bali, our one gross room technician at Parnassus (And YES, we only had 1 gross room assistant at Parnassus, and he did not do any grossing of specimens). I remember how the alveoli contained this unusual foamy exudate, but there was no concern for airborne spread or interpersonal contact. I also remember the first time I saw the GMS stain the next day, with alveoli packed with organisms. (Our histology lab, directed by Ms. Judy Vogt, soon developed the fast stains for GMS and AFB during this epidemic). Every day, after that first case, more and more unusual infections were handled by Surgical Pathology and Histology, and we started the policy of universal precautions for all our services to assume all cases we handled could be infected with this unknown agent. I see now that we were lucky that this virus was so fragile and not airborne, but still, the stress in the cutting room, cytology, and autopsy services remained relatively high, with the primary concerns for cuts and needle sticks. The most devastating stress during this epidemic for me was the rapid loss of friends and colleagues in the department and in the Bay Area. We lost several of the department administrative staff members that I had worked closely with during those first years of the epidemic; I lost a few friends as well, and all of them were missed. Unfortunately, in the AIDS epidemic, there were also some ugly similarities to this one, including the Federal Government’s inadequate and slow response and the response of some Americans, with many ignoring the victims who were suffering, some stating it was “God’s will they should be punished”.

On the positive side, at that time, climate change was not yet a center-stage issue, President Reagan was nothing like Trump, and attention had not yet been laser-focused on racial injustice as in this pandemic, but the ongoing stress of the AIDS epidemic in the 80’s still took its toll. I didn’t take any photos at that time of how we responded and of those who worked hard to adapt to the epidemic of the 80’s, and so, this time, I wanted to better document at least a few examples of how in these critical times in the history of our department, all faculty, trainees, and staff worked together to deal with a deadly disease. I thank all those who helped document these scenes.

Acknowledgements for the COVID and AIDS topics: Mark Weinstein, ZSFGH Anatomic Path Dept Manager, Melike Pekmezci MD, VAH; Kelly McNeill Chief Administrative officer AP; Tom Rocereto, Mt Zion Staff (my former assistant during my tenure as Vice-Chair); Soo-Jin Cho MD PhD; Elham Khanafshar MD; and Tara Saunders MD for helping organize and take photos, and to all staff, faculty, and trainees for allowing for their participation. Also thanks to UCSF Pathology Alum Nafis Shafizadeh, MD, for encouraging me to consider writing about the presentation of the AIDS epidemic at UCSF.

UCSF Pathology Steps Up to Respond to COVID-19:

A Photographic Representation of Department Faculty, Trainees and Staff contributions

Cytology Division at Mission Bay has adapted their FNA suite for patient and staff physical distancing and practice uniform masking and other precautions.



FNA clinical seating adapted for COVID for their FNA patients.



Administrative staff members, Aye Aye Maw and Dug Mei at entry to FNA Clinic at MB.



Assistant Professor Roberto Ruiz-Cordero, MD reviewing patient data with resident Hannah Lee, MD in the FNA admin area.

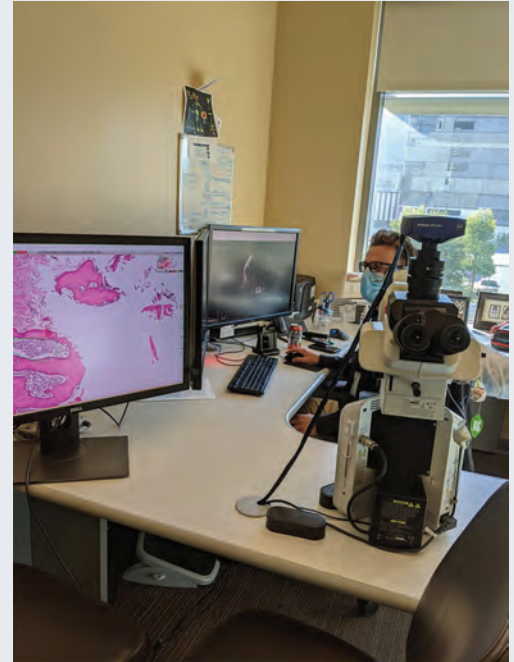


Dr. Britt-Marie Ljung wearing both an N95 mask as well as face shield while performing an ultrasound

Mission Bay Gross Room: Robert (Bob) Grefka, PA (ASCP) and Gross Room and Autopsy Supervisor, sends his greetings to our alums from the Frozen Section area of the MB Grossing room. (All of this area shown is actually a separate area for cutting and processing frozen sections.... The cutting room area is even larger!) Bob has helped lead our gross room and autopsy staff in our COVID response at the MB, Parnassus and Mt Zion sites. Fortunately, due to the much larger space in the cutting room at MB, physical distancing has not been an issue, and staff remain masked at all times. (10/30/20)



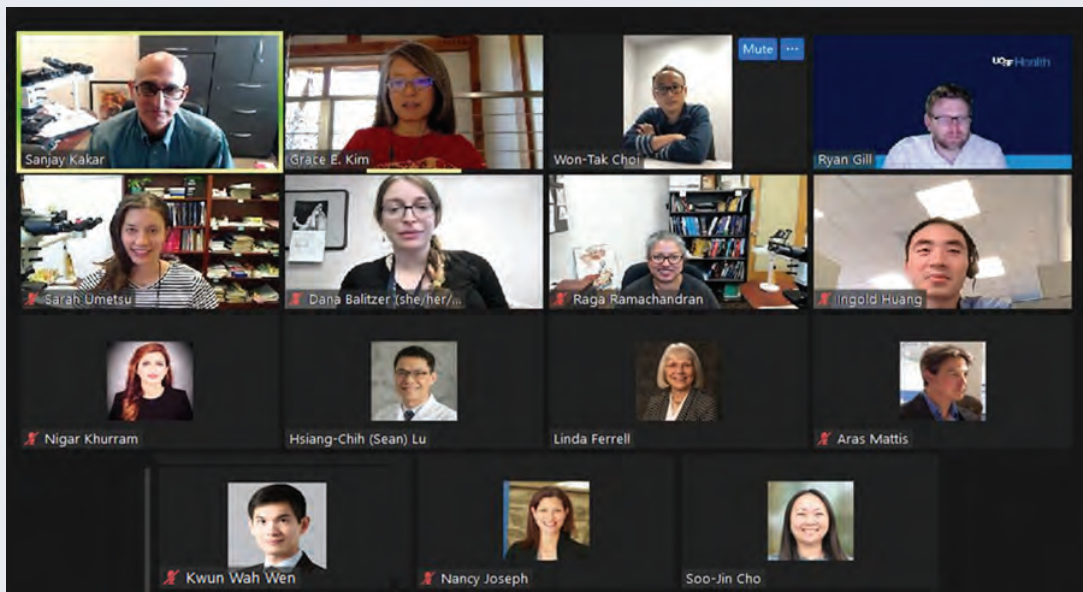
Bob Grefka in the Mission Bay Gross room. Mr Grefka was one of two certified PAs hired at UCSF in 2011, and became the Supervisor for the Gross Room Cutting staff in 2018.



Digital signout at Mission Bay with Dr. Andrew Horvai:

The resident is watching the digital image on the large monitor. Notice that the extra 3 heads present in the past have been removed for the pandemic and each faculty now has an extra large monitor for the digital image display.

Parnassus Site:



The GI-Hepatobiliary division, led by Dr. Sanjay Kakar, do both the biweekly consensus conference where they share the most difficult cases, as well as their monthly division educational teaching conference via Zoom and use of digital and virtual slide images. Screen shot of the division faculty, fellows, and other trainees attending consensus conference (10/31/20)

China Basin



Michael Caton, working at the China Basin site (note the "totally cool" view of the palm trees and SF Giants stadium from his window), to continue his work not only with personnel records, but also continuing to maintain dept social events during the pandemic via Zoom, including the recent holiday party on Dec 3.

Mt. Zion



Lars Schmitt, Mt Zion cutting room staff, at grossing bench. Mr Schmitt has been working for UCSF in pathology-related services since 1998, including Tissue Core (2000-2006), and PA (2006 to current).



Yuri Murphy, Histology Laboratory Supervisor, loading glass slides onto one of multiple Philips slide scanners already in place prior to the pandemic. Yuri started at UCSF in October 2013 and have been the Histology supervisor since April 2015.

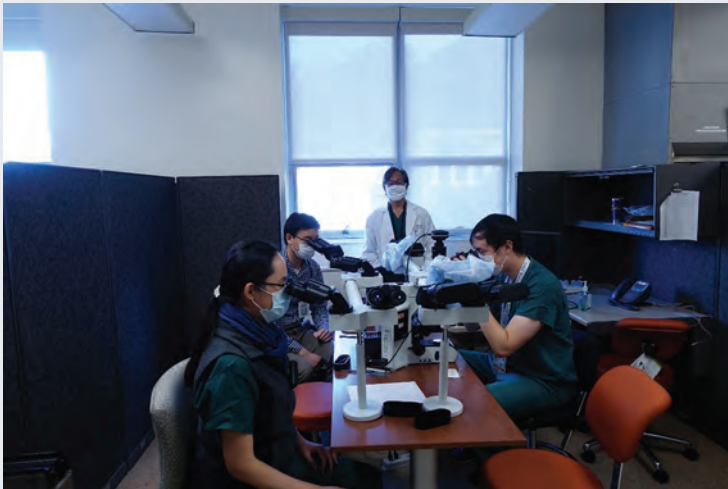
Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital



Case signout with Drs. Samhabadi and Akagi



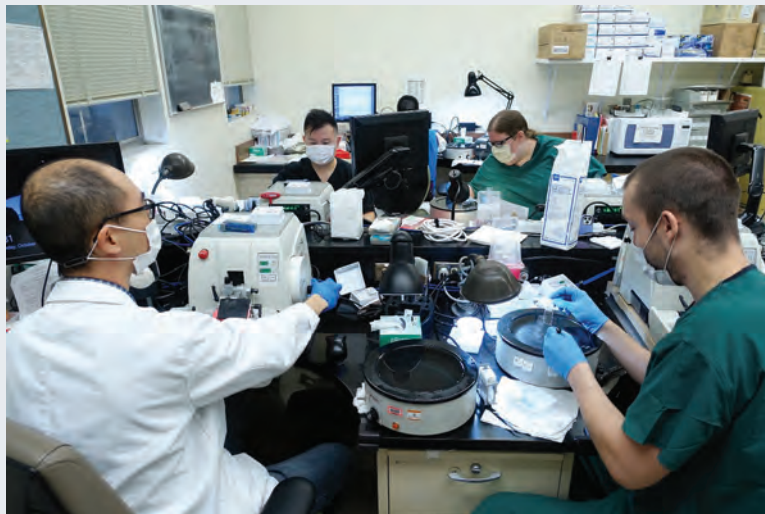
Department temperature check Dr. Gasper.



Resident teaching with Drs. Nishimura, Ding, Nguyen and Lu.



Cytotech Dominic Lung working masked and behind plexiglass screen.



Histotechs: Chan, Auge, Brown, Huey and Li

Veterans Affairs Hospital:



Melike Pekmezci, MD, signing out surgical pathology cases using video-assisted digital images at a multiheaded microscope with trainees.

Grand Rounds/MOD:



October 22,2020:

Grand Rounds is now fully done via zoom, and we have record attendances, in the upper 70s to low 80s. At this Grand Rounds, on Oct 22, 2020, Dr. Lucy Han, currently in CP, but having just completed her cytopathology fellowship at UCSF last year, is presenting a discussion on the "Oncocytic Variant of Mucoepidermoid Carcinoma of the Salivary Gland", also known as: Warthin-like mucoepidermoid carcinoma. Ekin Guney, 2nd year AP/NP trainee, was the other speaker, with a NP topic.

Dr Pekmezci is the faculty who hosts and organizes Grand Rounds

Awards



Dr. Aleksander Rajkovic, Professor, Chief Genomic Officer for UCSF Health, and Stuart Lindsay Distinguished Professor in Experimental Pathology, has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). The NAM, formerly known as the Institute of Medicine, is considered the highest honorific society in academic medicine in the US and its members include our most accomplished leaders in the advancement of biomedical sciences, health care delivery and public health. Aleks joins Dr. Abul Abbas, Emeritus Professor (former Chair and Distinguished Professor of Pathology), as the second NAM member in our Department

New Faculty



Dr. Cynthia Gasper (formerly Jimenez) received her MD from UCSF, and during that time, spent a year in our department as a post-sophomore fellow, followed by a year in Dr Tilsty's laboratory as a Howard Hugh's Scholar. After medical school, she joined our AP residency. She left UCSF for a gynecologic and perinatal pathology fellowship at Brigham and Women's Hospital before returning to the Bay Area to join a large private practice group in Northern California (DPMG). Cindy started at ZSFG on July 1, 2020 and serves as a surgical, gynecologic and cytopathologist.

Dr. Nicholas Ladwig received his MD degree from The Ohio State University College of Medicine, and did his AP/CP training, as well as a Surgical Pathology Fellowship and Gynecologic Pathology Fellowship here at UCSF. He started as an attending pathologist in Surgical Pathology, serving primarily on the gynecologic pathology service at the Mission Bay Hospital site on July 1, 2020.





Dr. Michael Tetzlaff received his MD and PhD from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas and his AP residency and Dermatopathology fellowship training at The Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He was an Associate Professor at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston Texas from 2010-2020 before joining the Dermatopathology faculty at UCSF this past August. He will be doing full time clinical dermatopathology.

Dr. Peyman Samghabadi received his MD from SUNY Stony Brook, and his AP/NP and cytopathology training at Stanford. He then spent several years at a private practice position at Pathology Associates in Fresno. He will be attending full time at ZSFG covering cytopathology and surgical pathology, as well as spending some time covering the muscle and nerve service in neuropathology.



Other Activities

USCAP Webcast

Pulmonary Fibrosis: An Algorithmic Approach to Diagnosis, Kirk D. Jones, MD, 10/8/2020

Uterine Mesenchymal Tumors with Deceptively Bland Morphology, Joseph T. Rabban, MD, MPH, 11/5/2020

USCAP Virtual Annual Meeting 2021

March 13th to March 18th, 2021

Many of our faculty and trainees will be presenting abstracts and/or other presentations at this course.

(Registration Now is Open)