



The History of the OTA

The concept of the Orthopaedic Trauma Association was evolved from a conversation that was held between Ramon Gustilo, M.D., Edwin G. Bovill, Jr., M.D. and Michael Chapman, M.D., January 31, 1977. At that time, Dr. Gustilo was paying a visit to San Francisco General Hospital. These three individuals were having lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant across from the hospital.

At that meeting they discussed the problems of working as full time academic traumatologists in a city hospital environment. The individuals felt that the unique challenge of trying to make an underfunded city hospital work, while meeting teaching responsibilities, had unique problems and a loose association of university-affiliated city-county hospital trauma association formed. This became the Orthopaedic Trauma Center Study Group. (OTCSG).

Membership was determined by personal invitation by Dr. Ramon Gustilo and the first-member hospitals included: Los Angeles County Hospital, J. Paul Harvey, M.D., chief; San Francisco General Hospital, Edwin G. Bovill, M.D., chief; Harborview Medical Center, Sigvard (Ted) Hanson, Jr., M.D., chief; Denver General Hospital, Renner Johnston, M.D.; Cook County Hospital, Chicago, Illinois, Arsen Pankovich, M.D., chief; and Boston City Hospital, David Segal, M.D., chief.

In 1978, Parkland Hospital, Dallas, Texas; Maryland Shock-Trauma, Baltimore, Maryland, Bruce Browner, chief; and Montefiore Hospital Medical Center with Edward T. Havermann, M.D., and Michael C. Distefano, M.D. joined.

The first meeting was held June 15 to June 17, 1978 at Los Angeles County Hospital with J. Paul Harvey acting as host. At that time, there were no by-laws nor officers. Meetings were held at medical centers on a sequential rotational basis. The meetings were held for two days and consisted of papers by the members, case presentation by the host facility, a tour of the host facilities and dinner.

These early meetings were useful. Many were able to share viewpoints on the cutting edge of trauma for the first time. This was an important forum for the trauma surgeon. It gave an opportunity to see others' working conditions and to learn how others dealt with the challenges of trauma in academic-affiliated county-city hospitals.

These early meetings of the Orthopaedic Trauma Hospital Association (OTHA) included:

- 1978 - June 15-17, Los Angeles County Hospital, J. Paul Harvey, M.D., host
- 1979 - Date unknown - Cook County Hospital, Chicago, Illinois, Arsen Pankovich, host
- 1980 - October 11-12, Boston City Hospital, David Segal, M.D., host
- 1981 - October 24-25, Hennepin County Hospital, Ramon Gustilo, M.D., host
- 1982 - October 24-25, Denver General Hospital, Renner Johnston, M.D., host
- 1983 - October 6-9, Hermann Medical Center, Houston, Taylor Smith, M.D., host
- 1984 - November 29-December 2, Maryland Shock-Trauma, Baltimore, Maryland, Andrew Burgess, M.D., host
- 1985 - September 14-15, Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx, New York, Edward T. Habermann, M.D. and Michael C. Distefano, M.D., hosts
- 1986 - November 19-22, San Francisco General Hospital, Michael W. Chapman, M.D., host

At the 1981 Meeting, a trauma registry system was introduced by Dr. Gustilo, voted on by the initial members. This was an early, loose-leaf binding with pictures and codes that was made available to all members. That meeting initiated support from industry and began to accumulate a small treasury to help support meetings.

It became evident that there was a need to better organize when the Council of Musculoskeletal Speciality Societies was founded by the AAOS in 1985. There was no national organization representing the North American Orthopaedic Traumatologists. Accordingly, in order to qualify for membership in COMSS, it was necessary for OTA to incorporate as a not-for-profit corporation with its own by-laws. Rules permitted any qualified member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons to apply for membership.

During this formative phase, Ramon Gustilo and Michael Chapman were primarily responsible for the organizational administrative efforts required to achieve this goal. Dr. Gustilo provided strong leadership during this period, particularly for fund raising from private industry.

Dr. Chapman provided the by-laws and the organization to incorporate and meet the requirements of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. The title "The Orthopaedic Trauma Association" was officially adopted in 1985.

At the San Francisco meeting, November 19-20, 1986, the by-laws and Articles of Incorporation were officially approved. Dr. Gustilo served as the first president in 1983 and 1984, and Dr. Chapman served as president of the incorporated organization in 1985 and 1986.

Dr. Charles C. Edwards served as the third president in 1987. It was during this period of time that the organization transformed into membership being based upon individuals, rather than membership based upon institutions. In addition to the incorporation and the internal workings of the organization, the Orthopaedic Trauma Association initiated educational meetings. The first

meeting was held in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1985 and was hosted by Charles Edwards and Alan Levine. This was an extremely successful meeting.

The second meeting was held in San Francisco and was sponsored by Dr. Lorraine Day.

The third meeting was held in November, 1987, again in Baltimore, hosted by Dr. Edwards and Dr. Levine.

John A. Cardea assumed the presidency in 1988 and established the Speciality Day for the Orthopaedic Trauma Association at the annual American Academy Orthopaedic Surgery Meeting. The thrust of this educational meeting would be a symposia with keynote speakers to educate the general orthopedist in the management of individual fractures and polytrauma. The symposia were setup to be subject oriented. That format has continued to this day.

Bruce D. Browner, M.D. served as a fifth president of the Orthopaedic Trauma Association. His tenure focused on the appointment of committee chairmen and the activation of various standing committees. A task force was appointed under the chairmanship of Brad Henley, M.D., to develop a proposal for revision of the CPT procedural codes for fractures and dislocations, as well as organized OTA participation in the AAOS-APT re-study of the physician work component of the resource-base relative value scale. These efforts ultimately led to revision in the HCFA payment policy for multiple procedures.

Joseph Schatzker of Toronto, Canada, served as the sixth president in 1990. During his tenure the joint meeting combined with the Canadian Orthopaedic Association for a truly international meeting. Guest speakers at the annual meeting included: Mr. Christopher Colton of Nottingham, England, and keynote speakers Professor Heinz Kuderna of Vienna, Austria and Professor Harold Tscherne of Hanover, Germany.

Richard Kyle of Minneapolis, Minnesota, served as the seventh president, from 1991 to 1992. During his tenure the Orthopaedic Education and Research Foundation for OTA was established by the board. This was the beginning of the organization's attempt to fund programs for orthopaedic trauma research. The annual meeting was held in Seattle, October 31st through November 2, 1991.

Nineteen Ninety-Two was an important year for the Orthopaedic Trauma Association. With the presidency of Dr. Robert Winquist, the annual meeting was held in Minneapolis, October 1-3, 1992. During his tenure, the first Trauma Update was held in Vail, Colorado, May 28-30, 1992, followed by two courses held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 30 - May 1, 1993, and Seattle, Washington, May 21-22, 1993. David Helfet helped establish the Trauma Fellowship Matching Program with the first match being held May 13, 1992.

Peter G. Trafton served as the ninth president in 1993 through 1994. The annual meeting was held in New Orleans, Louisiana and was held concurrently with the 53rd Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma (AAST). Emphasis was placed on mutual interest with combined scientific sessions. Professor Harold Tscherne of Hanover, Germany, spoke on "Musculoskeletal Management of Multiply Injured Patients."

Kenneth D. Johnson of Nashville, Tennessee, served as the tenth president in 1994 through 1995, the annual meeting being held September 22-24, 1994, in Los Angeles, California. A regional Trauma Update was held in Chicago, Illinois, May 13-14, 1994.

Alan M. Levine, M.D. of Baltimore, Maryland, served as the eleventh president in 1995 through 1996. During Dr. Levine's tenure, the Orthopaedic Knowledge Update on Trauma (OKU) was published. A Trauma Update was held May 19-20, 1995, in Buffalo, New York. The annual meeting was held in Tampa, Florida, September 29 to October 1, 1995. Prior to the meeting, the Orthopaedic Trauma Association held its first resident course. It was an overwhelming success.

It is clear that the goals of the Founding Fathers of the Orthopaedic Trauma Hospital Association and the Orthopaedic Trauma Association have certainly been met regarding research, education and advancement of trauma care. The evolution of the Orthopaedic Trauma Association has proved to be an organization dedicated to the care of trauma patients on the highest plane. Members have been active in teaching, educating and providing quality patient care.

All of our members can be proud of the achievements of the past and look forward to a future blending of science and medicine in the emerging decades.

Respectfully submitted, Michael C. Distefano, M.D.