



Lawrence DiDomenico, DPM

Meet this year's Hall of Fame inductee.

BY DON LEMELLE, DPM

It is my privilege to introduce my lifelong friend, Larry DiDomenico, DPM, who is to be honored with induction into the *PM* Podiatry Hall of Fame. Larry has distinguished himself as a leader in our profession as educator, teacher, role model, and innovator. His road to success has been driven by his own internal compass to excel at what we do as podiatric physicians.

Larry and I first met in podiatry medical school as roommates 38 years ago when we were young and naïve. We soon discovered there were not enough residency programs for graduates. Most residencies were one-year programs and there were no podiatric fellowship opportunities. Podiatry as a whole was still fighting for hospital and surgical privileges. Upon graduation, Larry was fortunate to obtain his surgical training in Buffalo, New York. While this is the point where most of us began practicing podiatry as we were trained, this was just the beginning of more training for Larry and expanding his scope of practice.

Over the next 10 years, Larry started and grew his private practice. Unbelievably, he took time from his new practice and income for an AO Fellowship in Germany. It was during this fellowship that Larry realized the importance of educational training opportunities for himself and others. He then completed another fellowship in Germany, one in Switzerland, one in Seattle, and an Ilizarov fellowship in Russia. The sacrifice and dedication this took is difficult to understand today when we have three-year surgical residency training as well as



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fellowships, but at the time it was truly unique and unprecedented. Obviously, these opportunities helped to expand his skill set to the elite level.

In 1994, Larry was appointed Director of the residency program at Youngstown Osteopathic Hospital. He grew the residency from a PSR-12 program to a PSR-36 program, and in 1999 transitioned the program to Northside Hospital in Youngstown. He is now residency Director of East Liverpool City Hospital. In 2004, he established the NOMS (Northern Ohio Medical Specialists) Rear Foot and Ankle Surgical Fellowship. This was one of the earliest podiatric fellowships. He has trained and mentored approximately 112 residents and 17 fellows with the same dedica-

tion and skills for their patients as he has been consistently providing. Throughout the years, I have met many of his former residents and fellows, who speak of Larry with awe and respect for what he has given them in training, and the example he sets.

In 2005, Larry began the most important phase of his life, marrying the love of his life Maura. The wedding was in his father's childhood hometown of Bugnara, Italy, honoring his deceased father. All the passion, dedication, and commitment that Larry showed in podiatry has now been multiplied tenfold to the passion, dedication, and commitment he expresses for his family of two beautiful girls and twin boys. His residents and fellows have all benefited from his example of balancing family and practice.

Larry has been a national and international speaker. He has presented over 900 lectures all over the world, including Germany, Italy, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Canada, and Russia. He has chaired 58 scientific seminars. In this capacity, Larry has sought out physicians who share their innovative procedures to advance podiatry. A leader in scientific studies, Larry has published 116 scientific articles and participated in 21 research studies. His articles and lectures on frontal plane rotation of the sesamoids during tarsal-metatarsal arthrodesis (Lapidus) have impacted the procedure and my personal approach.

In 2014, Larry was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. With this diagnosis, he could easily have retired, and colleagues, patients, and mentees would

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have understood—but he did not. That year, he remained scientific co-chairman of the Ohio Foot and Ankle Medical Association yearly meeting while his own imminent future was uncertain. He lectured, ran the meeting, and

Committee, and as an Oral Examiner. He is a co-founder of SALSAL (Save a Limb, Save a Life), has served on numerous editorial boards for podiatric publications, and numerous other boards and committees in healthcare. Amazingly, with all this success, Larry has remained truly humble.

of time. Larry beat the odds and remains in remission and they all have become stronger people for it. He has never wavered from his role in the podiatric arena, whether with lectures or traveling engagements. He is the epitome of hard work and stick-to-it-ness while remaining devoted to the things he loves in life.

Most importantly he has openly shared all that he has to offer and continues to guide our next generation of podiatric surgeons.

associated with peers, never letting on that he was in pain. Throughout his battle with cancer, Larry has continued to travel, lecture, and participate in hands-on seminars. Fortunately, after aggressive treatment including chemotherapy, steroids, and a stem cell transplant, Larry has entered into remission. His attitude during this battle has remained positive and upbeat. He continues to devote himself to his family and profession.

In 34 years, Larry has built his private practice into a group of 17 podiatric surgeons with their own diagnostic center (including MRI) as well as other modalities of medicine and surgery. He has continued to invest in the profession, including a recent surgical lab for training. The surgical lab is available for instructional training and honing surgical procedures and skills.

Over the years, Larry has received numerous awards for manuscripts, papers, and research. In 2004, he received the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award from the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine, now Kent State University. In 2015, he was the winner of the Distinguished Service Award from the American College of Podiatric Medicine Hall of Fame. Additionally, he was awarded the Ilizarov Award of Excellence at the Annual External Fixation Symposium at the University of Texas—San Antonio; and later that same year, he was inducted into the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine Hall of Fame.

As a fellow of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, he has served on the Board of Directors, Publications Committee, Fellowship

Larry has not just touched the lives of his residents and fellows, and many patients with his care, compassion, and depth of knowledge and skill; he has impacted the lives of many podiatrists—including myself. Most importantly he has openly shared all that he has to offer and continues to guide our next generation of podiatric surgeons. Congratulations on a well-deserved honor of induction into the *PM* Podiatry Hall of Fame.

Larry has truly invested his life in the podiatry profession. Besides being the managing partner of a 17-member podiatry group (of which I am proud to be a part) for over 25 years, he has spent countless hours organizing residency programs, fellowships, research, and publications. His surgical background is extensive, having studied abroad in Germany and Russia, and he has a need to convey his education to the upcoming generation of young podiatrists, which will benefit the future of podiatry. He is always striving to seek the correct solution to all problems involved with education. He is also on the Med/Mal review group.

There are many accolades and accomplishments that can be attributed

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Tributes

Robert Debiec, DPM

I am sincerely honored to pay tribute to Dr. Lawrence DiDomenico on his selection for the *PM* Podiatry Hall of Fame. I have known Larry for 40 years pre-podiatry to his present status and position. I truly believe he has planned those years of development to bring him to the forefront of the podiatry profession.

Personally, he is the most dedicated father and husband to his beautiful family, being present at practices, games, piano lessons. He and his wife made sure that there was stability and love maintained throughout the inter-relationships of the family members while he and his wife were addressing his health issues out of state for extended periods

to Larry. Above all, he is humble and grateful, and keeps pushing forward. I am proud to be his partner and he is well deserving of the Hall of Fame honor.

Zachery Flynn, DPM

Dr. DiDomenico and his contributions to the field podiatry are immeasurable. When you take into account the impact he has had on training residents, fellows, and peers, the knowledge he imparts has spread across the country and the world. Additionally, his contributions to the field of research and surgical technique have impacted the lives of thousands of patients.

Personally, he altered the course of my career, specifically in my ability to run my practice and change pa-

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tient outcomes and lives. Coming into his fellowship was a daunting and sometimes nerve-racking experience, but if I could offer any advice to apprehensive applicants, it would be to accept the hard coaching. The hours were long, the expectations endless, but I wouldn't be where I am without his guidance and mentorship. Every time a patient with complex symptoms walks into my office I can still hear Larry's voice telling me what he would do in that situation. Even though those cases are often the most time-consuming and difficult, they are also the most rewarding. Some patients have seen countless other doctors who have told them amputation is the only answer, and if I hadn't met Dr. D, I would probably have said the same thing; but now I can see beyond the mess to what it could be through reconstruction and a well-trained eye. His motto and now mine remains, "Position is king, get it aligned." Our relationship and his mentorship have been the most impactful of my entire career. And if I ever need advice, I know he's always a phone call away.

"He has guided many young physicians and given unselfishly of his time to our professional organizations, KSUCPM and various boards over the span of his career."—Siceloff

We developed a level of trust and respect, and what I learned from him didn't end with practice management or surgical skills. This is a man who also loves and values his family above all else. Your career and business will only take you so far, but it's your family that is your true legacy and your biggest accomplishment. He always made a point of saying how they will be there for you long after your career ends. I agree and try to model that same behavior in my life, making sure I am present for all those special moments with my family.

The field of podiatry would not be what it is today without pioneers like Dr. DiDomenico who were not

afraid to take foot and ankle surgery to the next level. No one is more deserving of this honor than Dr. D.

T. Eric Siceloff, DPM

Dr. DiDomenico is well deserving of the distinguished honor of induction into the *Podiatry Management* Hall of Fame. He is a mentor, lecturer,

lecturer, author, excellent educator, as well as a podiatric physician and surgeon who has given so much to our profession. His lectures regarding hallux valgus and ankle reconstruction are sought after throughout the world. He has guided many young physicians and given unselfishly of his time to our professional organizations,

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innovator, leader, trusted colleague, and successful physician. Dr D has built a well-respected practice in Northeast Ohio that began with only a few physicians and has grown to fourteen physicians, many of whom trained with him and chose to stay and continue to practice with him.

Dr. DiDomenico is an outstanding educator. I had the good fortune of meeting him when he answered the

KSUCPM and various boards over the span of his career. I am proud to be able to see Dr. DiDomenico receive the esteemed honor of induction into the *PM Podiatry* Hall of Fame.

James Mazur, DPM

I am so honored to pay tribute to Dr. Larry DiDomenico on being selected to the *PM Podiatry* Hall of Fame. I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award! I have had the great pleasure of knowing Larry both professionally and personally for close to forty years. He and I first met as roommates in podiatry school and have remained close friends all through the years.

I have never met a more skilled surgeon. If there is such a thing as a natural born surgeon, it would be Dr. DiDomenico. He can determine the best procedure for any difficult foot/ankle problem, and perform the necessary surgery to correct it. I do not know any podiatrist more skilled or qualified to receive this award.

Larry is also a devoted husband and father. He is a man of deep conviction and faith. Whatever obstacles that have come into his life, he has faced them with courage and determination not to give up. One of the greatest tributes that I can give to Larry D. is that once you are his friend, you're a friend for life. It is my honor to call Dr. Larry DiDomenico a colleague, but it is even a greater honor to call him my friend.

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call of our profession and took a one-year training residency in podiatric surgery and ushered it into a premier three-year surgical residency that produced well-trained physicians year after year. He even went one step further to provide a fellowship program to advance the training of our profession in foot and ankle surgery. I had the privilege to be part of his residency program and to know him as a colleague, mentor, and a friend. He continues to guide and advise many of the physicians he was integral in training throughout the years.

Dr. DiDomenico is a husband, father, friend, mentor, pre-eminent leader in our profession, world class

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Danielle Butto, DPM

It is an absolute honor to be writing a tribute for Dr. Larry DiDomenico. I think it goes without saying, he is an absolute pioneer in the world of foot

I had asked him to shadow his practice for a month. Without hesitation, he opened his practice. One month turned into three and he let me continuously show up and ask questions. Four years later, I got the opportunity to be his fellow. That year has always been

“Beyond his commitment to teaching is his commitment to his patients.”—Butto

and ankle surgery. At a time when residencies weren't common, were only one year and fellowships weren't even heard of, he sought out advanced training. He took it upon himself to travel both locally, all over the U.S., and internationally, to harbor and advance his skills. To this day, he continues to learn and perfect his craft.

I first met Larry when I was a fourth-year podiatric medical student.

and will continue to be the greatest privilege of my career. He makes it his sole mission for that year to be highly involved in his fellows' training, teaching not only surgical and practice skills but life skills as well. His dedication to teaching goes unmatched. He serves as fellowship director and residency director. He continues to teach courses across the states and has never let down his commitment to research.

Beyond his commitment to teaching is his commitment to his patients. He fights tirelessly to do right by his patients, whether it's saving a limb or fixing long-term deformities. He starts his days early and ends them even later, all to be available to personally see each patient. I am honored to have worked beside Dr. DiDomenico and grateful he still lets me call and text him about all of my difficult patients! Despite all of his numerous awards, he remains humble, kind, selfless and determined. Congratulations on this well-deserved award! **PM**



Dr. LeMelle practices in Springfield, OH.

Honorable Mention

Congratulations to the following podiatrists, alphabetically listed, who received the next highest number of votes in the 38th Annual *Podiatry Management* Lifetime Achievement Award.

Stephen Barrett, DPM, Marietta, GA
H. “Bunny” Brown, DPM, Heber Springs, AR
James Christina, DPM, Bethesda, MD
Chet Evans, DPM, Miami Shores, FL
John Guiliana, DPM, Hackettstown, NJ
Michael King, DPM, Nashville, TN
Steven Kravitz, DPM, Winston-Salem, NC
Lawrence Lavery, DPM, Dallas, TX
Jeffrey Lehrman, DPM, Springfield, PA
Marc Lenet, DPM, Baltimore, MD
Leonard Levy, DPM, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Kenneth Malkin, DPM, Boynton Beach, FL

John Mattiacchi, DPM, Philadelphia, PA
Nancy Parsley, DPM, Chicago, IL
Jeffrey Robbins, DPM, Cleveland, OH
Lee Rogers, DPM, Las Vegas, NV
Lee Sanders, DPM, Lebanon, PA
Harold Schoenhaus, DPM, Philadelphia, PA
Alan Sherman, DPM, Boca Raton, FL
Lloyd Smith, DPM, Newton Centre, MA
Frank Spinosa, DPM Albuquerque, NM
Kathleen Stone, DPM, Glendale, AZ
Ross Taubman, DPM, Brentwood, TN
Harold Vogler, DPM, Tampa, FL

Congratulations to following individuals, alphabetically listed, who received the next highest votes in the non-podiatrist category.

Dorothy Cahill-McDonald
Mike Crosby
Tina Del Buono
SuEllen Dercher
Herman Hammerschmidt
Daniel Kline

Kevin Kruse
Chris Mahaffey
Moraith North
Phil Park
Mary Pulliam
Krista Richter

Jimelle Rumberg, PhD
Shawna Shapero
Leonard Thaler
Alan Tinkleman
Norman Wallis, PhD