



# Jeff Root Enters the PM Hall of Fame

He joins Merton Root as the first father/son inductees.

RICHARD L. BLAKE, DPM, MS

I am so proud to hear Jeff was selected for the *Podiatry Management Hall of Fame*. This immense honor reflects his lifelong commitment to the profession of podiatry and the field of lower extremity biomechanics. But, first, a little bit about the person.

Jeff is married to his wife Kathy for 36 years. Kathy and Jeff were married in 1989. They have two sons (Brian age 33 and Gary age 30). From 1984 through 1995, he was a volunteer firefighter and EMT-D for Placer County. Later he served as a part-time Assistant Chief for Placer Hills Fire District in Meadow Vista, California. He would frequently respond from work at Root Lab for structure and wildland fires and other significant incidents.

His early involvement in podiatry came by working at his dad's orthotic laboratory in 1978. I met him while visiting the lab in 1979.

He was attending college with a focus on biological science. The lab enabled his focus on science to become a great career. He enjoyed working with clients because of his developing strong interest in biomechanics. For a good number of years, he worked side-by-side with other employees doing the same work and earning the same wages. In other words, he received no special treatment simply because he was Merton Root's son.

Dr. Root developed a biomechanical and foot orthotic educational course at the lab. Once a week, they would meet and he would lecture and give homework. Over time, he became



Jeff Root

more confident handling consultations, and always had his father to consult with if he needed assistance before contacting a client to discuss a case. Root Lab also sponsored an annual biomechanics seminar which was always sold out. Jeff learned a great deal while attending these seminars. After his father passed away, he co-owned the lab with his father's wife Elaine, who helped found the lab in 1974, until she retired in 2003. After he took over the lab, Root Laboratory began to advertise for the first time. He also invested in a CAD/CAM system in order to take advantage of that technology. Root Lab also began to

exhibit at conferences for the first time.

Jeff was a board member and past president of PFOLA (Prescription Foot Orthotic Lab Association) that made great progress in bringing all foot orthotic laboratories forward. He worked on a committee to create technical standards and standard terminology for the foot orthotic industry and the professions they serve, including podiatry.

Jeff has also lectured at various seminars and institutions including CCPM, CSPM, PFOLA, The Western Foot and Ankle Conference, The Midwest Podiatry Conference, PFOLA, and the Canadian Pedorthic Association. He is an author and coauthor of several articles in *Podiatry Management Magazine*.

I have watched Jeff's active social media presence always trying to bring up the biomechanical standards throughout the world. He brings to every part of his life a caring and thoughtful approach. Podiatry has been his life, and he has given his heart and soul back to podiatry a hundred-fold.

Jeff Root's career has been characterized by an unwavering dedication to advancing the science and practice of podiatric medicine. As the owner of Root Functional Orthotic Laboratory, he not only upheld but elevated the standards of excellence set by his father's pioneering work. His innovative spirit and meticulous attention to detail have been instrumental in developing orthotic solutions that improve the quality of life for countless individuals.

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Jeff Root (from page 43)

Beyond his technical contributions, Jeff is celebrated for his role as a mentor and educator. His passion for sharing knowledge has fostered a culture of learning and collaboration within the field, inspiring new generations of practitioners. Whether through seminars, workshops, or personal mentorship, his insights have empowered podiatrists to better understand the complexities of foot and ankle biomechanics. He is continuing that amazing work as part of the executive team at KevinRootMedical.

Those who have had the privilege to work with Jeff can attest to his humility, kindness, and integrity. He has built a community where innovation thrives and where colleagues feel valued and inspired. In celebrating Jeff's induction into the *Podiatry Management* Hall of Fame, we honor not only his remarkable achievements and contributions to podiatry but also the profound impact he has had on individuals and communities around the world. Jeff's legacy is one of compassion, curiosity, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. His work will continue to resonate, inspiring advancements in the field for many years to come. Congratulations, Jeff, on this well-deserved recognition. Your dedication and passion light the way for others to follow.

## Tributes

### Robert D. Phillips, DPM:

It's tough for any child to have a famous parent. Jeff Root had the fortune or misfortune of being the son of one of the most famous podiatrists, Merton L. Root. Few have handled such a legacy with such grace and intellectual honesty as Jeff Root. He didn't try to become his father or try to outdo him. While his father was alive, Jeff always was seen as a supporting son; however, since the passing of his father, Jeff has risen to be a strong defender of many of his father's theories. He has shown honesty to the biomechanics community in calling out false and misleading accusations against Merton Root. At the same time, he has shown the greatest civility and respect for those who may challenge various theories, and he has also shown intellectual integrity by ac-

cepting valid criticisms and has readily accepted research that requires changes in theory and application of theory.

The Merton Root that I came to know over my 20+ years of associating with him found a man who saw himself as only an energy source to charge the profession up to undertake more research on how the foot worked and how it affected the entire body. As one looks at Mert Root's influence on biomechanics, one only has to look at the number of peer-reviewed journals devoted to biomechanics. In 1979,

there was only one such journal, *The Journal of Biomechanics*. At last count, there are at least a dozen such journals. Jeff Root, in his quiet and persistent manner, has kept the fire burning, challenging people to do more research and further biomechanics thinking and making sure that research done has validity. It is with pleasure that I see him honored by *PM* with induction into the Hall of Fame.

### Steven E. Tager, DPM:

In 1966 I met Merton Root, DPM. It was a privilege and honor to learn from him and get to know his family. I've worked with both Jeff and Kathy from the very beginning of Root Lab until my retirement a few short years ago. Jeff's character, credibility, sincerity, knowledge, and reliability are truly unique. His knowledge of lower extremity biomechanics rivals the best. Placing him in the *PM* Podiatry Hall of Fame is a must. Without the actual doctorate degree, he certainly deserves the honor and respect of the title. I am proud to call him my friend and wish him and his family the very best.

### Kirk Herring, DPM:

Today, while out on a run, I was reminded of the important role my functional foot orthoses play in the quality of my life. While Jeff Root's pedigree is other than a traditional path to custom foot orthoses, he always impressed me

with his drive to transcend the shortcomings of podiatry and biomechanics with the industry of making custom foot orthoses (CFOs). Under Jeff's supervision, my prescriptions for CFOs took life, enhancing the quality of life for thousands of my patients. Jeff, thank you for being an advocate for podiatry and for your insight into the art of "making foot orthoses", and for all of those long after-hour discussions we shared regarding the unique functional and structural needs of so many patients. I miss our conversations!

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**The name "Root" has great significance within the podiatric profession, and Jeff should be proud of the legacy he has so honorably perpetuated.—Feldman**

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### Stefan Feldman, DPM:

I have had the pleasure and privilege of getting to know Jeff the past couple of years, working alongside him at an orthotic laboratory. He is a true gentleman and friend. Although he does not have the title "Doctor", he is worthy of it. The name "Root" has great significance within the podiatric profession, and Jeff should be proud of the legacy he has so honorably perpetuated. Here's to you, Jeff!

### Howard Dananberg, DPM:

I have known Jeff Root for many years and I'm pleased with his induction into the *PM* Podiatry Hall of Fame. His drive, knowledge of biomechanics, and love of the podiatry profession certainly makes him a worthy *PM* Podiatry Hall of Fame member. In addition, his support for podiatric medicine through his lab is so commendable as it has kept the importance of podiatric biomechanics alive and kicking. I wish that he and his family enjoy this honor and that he is able to continue to contribute to our profession for many years to come.

### Doug Richie, DPM:

Over the past 40 years, I have had the privilege of knowing Jeff Root and have a unique perspective of his interactions with both the academic podiatric biomechanics community as well as the commercial foot orthotics industry.

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## Honorable Mention

Congratulations to the following podiatrists, alphabetically listed, who received the next highest number of votes in the 40th Annual *Podiatry Management* Lifetime Achievement Award.

Stephen Barrett, DPM, Marietta, GA  
H. "Bunny" Brown, DPM, Heber Springs, AR  
James Christina, DPM, Bethesda, MD  
Patrick DeHeer, DPM, Indianapolis IN  
Chet Evans, DPM, Miami Shores, FL  
John Guiliana, DPM, Hackettstown, NJ  
Randy Kaplan, DPM, Southfield, MI  
Michael King, DPM, Franklin, TN  
Steven Kravitz, DPM, Winston-Salem, NC  
Lawrence Lavery, DPM, Dallas, TX  
Bruce Lawrence, DPM, Oceanside, CA  
John Mattiacchi, DPM, Philadelphia, PA  
Nancy Parsley, DPM, Chicago, IL  
Douglas Richie, DPM, Long Beach, CA  
Jeffrey Robbins, DPM, Cleveland, OH  
Harold Schoenhaus, DPM, Philadelphia, PA  
Alan Sherman, DPM, Boca Raton, FL  
Robert Snyder, DPM, Tamarac, FL  
Frank Spinosa, DPM, Albuquerque, NM  
Kathleen Stone, DPM, Glendale, AZ  
Ross Taubman, DPM, Brentwood, TN  
Dyane E. Tower, DPM, MPH, MS, Bethesda, MD  
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	Krista Richter
Tina Del Buono	Jimelle Rumberg, PhD
Dinah Gorelik, MD	Mary Pulliam
Keith Greer	Kim Rhatigan
Scott Haag	Krista Richter
Herman Hammerschmidt	Shawna Shapero
Jean Kirk	Stephanie Simmons
Daniel Kline	Heather Stagliano, DHSc
Kevin Kruse	Peggy Tresky
Lisa Lee	Leonard Thaler
Moraith North	Alan Tinkleman
Phil Park	Norman Wallis, PhD

# PM LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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Jeff Root (from page 44)

From an academic standpoint, Jeff is both an icon and an enigma. An icon, because he has taken the name Root to an even higher level than his famous father did. Thanks to the Internet, Jeff has actively participated in international academic forums, providing clarification and new insight into his father's teachings for over 20 years. An enigma, because Jeff never attended podiatry school or had formal training in biomechanics, yet he can hold his own in any conversation or debate with academic leaders of our profession.

Jeff has not only been a staunch defender of his father's teachings, he has always displayed an open mind to new ideas and insights from researchers and academics in the

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**Jeff Root has always been one of, if not the most, respected leader in the custom foot orthotic industry.—Richie**

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field of lower extremity biomechanics. We are blessed to have someone like Jeff who can accurately recall what Mert Root intended when he taught the podiatric profession the essentials of examination and implementation of biomechanical treatments. All too often, mis-informed individuals have inappropriately criticized "Root Theory", and Jeff has always been there to set the record straight and defend the integrity of his father. At the same time, Jeff has fully recognized new insights gained from modern biomechanical research which has refuted and re-directed some of Mert Root's insights.

Jeff Root has always been one of, if not the most, respected leader in the custom foot orthotic industry. He was one of the founding members of the Prescription Foot Orthotic Laboratory Association (PFOLA), and he has participated in every one of their scientific meetings, providing workshops on impression casting and prescription of custom foot orthoses. His workshops were always among the most popular and well-attended sessions of all the PFOLA meetings. Virtually every owner of a custom foot orthotic lab in America has benefitted from knowing Jeff Root. Instead of being a competitor, Jeff has always been a colleague of every lab owner...willing to share knowledge of the industry and make recommendations for improvements in quality and efficiency.

I can think of nobody more deserving to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the podiatric profession than Jeff Root.

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It has been an honor to have Jeff Root as a friend and a colleague for the past forty years. Congratulations, Jeff! PM



**Dr. Blake** is a practicing podiatrist in San Francisco California. He teaches at the College of Podiatric Medicine at Samuel Merritt University in Oakland, California. He is Past President of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine and has written numerous books and articles in podiatry, biomechanics, and sports medicine.