



The Society  
of Thoracic  
Surgeons

**NEWS  
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## **John H. Calhoon Elected President of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons**

***University of Texas surgeon will focus on strengthening relationship with cardiology and addressing surgeon payment***

CHICAGO (January 30, 2022) – Cardiothoracic surgeon John H. Calhoon, MD, from The University of Texas Health Science Center (UT Health) at San Antonio, was elected President of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons during the organization’s virtual 58th Annual Meeting today.

“To be elected by one’s peers is about a flattering an honor as one can receive,” said Dr. Calhoon. “This is an exceptional opportunity to work with the STS surgeons and team leaders to make decisions and take strategic action to hopefully improve the Society and our specialty.”

With a father who was a cardiac surgeon, Dr. Calhoon was fortunate to spend many of his teen years in and around operating rooms. This life-shaping experience “cinched it” for him, he said. In addition, being a medical student in Houston during the era of world-renowned surgeons Michael E. DeBakey, MD, and Denton A. Cooley, MD, and doing clinical rotations with E. Stanley Crawford, MD, further inspired him to pursue a career in cardiothoracic surgery.

Early in his career, Dr. Calhoon also was educated by cardiothoracic superstars like J. Kent Trinkle, MD, and Frederick L. Grover, MD. “The largest influence likely was my time with Dr. Trinkle and Dr. Grover—both played a huge role in my development,” he said.

Dr. Calhoon earned his medical degree from the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, before completing residencies in general surgery and thoracic surgery at UT Health at San Antonio. He then served as the chief resident in pediatric cardiac surgery at Boston Children's Hospital in Massachusetts under Aldo R. Castañeda, MD, John E. Mayer Jr., MD, and Richard A. Jonas, MD. Afterward, he returned to UT Health at San Antonio, where he’s been practicing ever since. Dr. Calhoon currently is the founding chairman of the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UT Health at San Antonio, as well as professor and head of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the Long School of Medicine.

Through the years, the specialty has advanced and is “much different” than when Dr. Calhoon first began his career. He explained that cardiothoracic surgery will continue to change, so much so, that there will “no doubt come a day when the specialty that I've practiced will look nothing like the cardiothoracic surgery that younger people are learning.” His advice is to adapt and innovate in this field that he describes as “intoxicating with unparalleled highs and lows.”

With interests and expertise in complex adult and congenital cardiac surgery, heart and lung transplantation, and improving patient care and education for surgeons, Dr. Calhoon has authored or co-authored more than 250 peer-reviewed journal articles, abstracts, and book chapters. He also has participated in hundreds of presentations on these topics.

An STS member since 1992, Dr. Calhoon has served on numerous Society leadership bodies; most recently he was First Vice President. Dr. Calhoon also was Workforce Chair on the Council on Education and Member Services Operating Board and a Director-at-Large on the Board of Directors, as well as Chair of the Workforce on Annual Meeting. In addition, he was a member of the Workforce on Critical Care, Workforce on E-Learning and Educational Innovation, Workforce on Health Policy, Reform, and Advocacy, and the PAC Board of Advisors.

Dr. Calhoon has held prominent leadership positions in other cardiothoracic surgery organizations, including the Southern Thoracic Surgical Association, Thoracic Surgery Directors Association, American Board of Thoracic Surgery, and The Thoracic Surgery Foundation—the charitable arm of STS.

“Being selected by peers to lead a number of thoracic organizations has been tremendously rewarding,” said Dr. Calhoon. “There is nothing more gratifying than having people who you respect ask for your help or advice.”

As STS President, Dr. Calhoon said he is committed to furthering some of the goals of his predecessors such as working to improve the world-renowned STS National Database and the relationship between cardiothoracic surgeons and cardiologists, while better aligning the two specialties on the treatment of cardiovascular disease. Also, important is addressing Medicare reimbursement challenges and advancing other advocacy priorities intended to promote the specialty and its patients.

“We should all do our best at getting better—whether it’s health, knowledge, professionalism, or skills—we will pay attention to it. No doubt, a few sand traps will be thrown into our fairways of life again this year, so we will work together to get through, over, and around them,” said Dr. Calhoon.

Dr. Calhoon and his wife Sarah Lucero, who is a retired news anchor, have four children. He enjoys spending time in his workshop—metal working, welding, and crafting things out of wood. In fact, Dr. Calhoon has made most of the furniture in their home. An avid golfer, Dr. Calhoon credits his grandfather and professional golfer and coach Harvey Penick for his love of the game. “Mr. Penick taught me so much more than just golf, just as golf has taught me so much about life,” he said.

Also elected during the Annual Meeting were Thomas E. MacGillivray, MD, from Houston, Texas, as First Vice President, and Jennifer C. Romano, MD, MS, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, as Second Vice President.

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Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,700 cardiothoracic surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lung, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The Society's mission is to advance cardiothoracic surgeons' delivery of the highest quality patient care through collaboration, education, research, and advocacy.