



The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
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News

For Immediate Release

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Sean C. Grondin Elected President of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

First Canadian STS President in 40 years will focus on developing collaboration and building surgeon leaders

CHICAGO (January 31, 2021) – Cardiothoracic surgeon Sean C. Grondin, MD, MPH, FRCSC, from the University of Calgary, today was elected President of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons during the organization’s virtual 57th Annual Meeting.

“Becoming the President of STS is one of the major highlights of my professional career,” said Dr. Grondin. “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the Society for many years, and it’s exciting to be involved in the leadership team. The opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the renowned Canadian cardiac surgeon, Dr. Anthony Dobell (STS President 1981-82), and to be the first Canadian general thoracic surgeon who is STS President is a huge honor.”

While in medical school at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, Dr. Grondin met his first influential mentor—Drew C.G. Bethune, MD, MSc. A general thoracic surgeon, Dr. Bethune was “an enthusiastic instructor” who invited Dr. Grondin to shadow him in his practice during a first-year elective.

“I really appreciated the time that Dr. Bethune invested in teaching me. His dedication to patients and professional mannerisms were inspiring and no doubt had a profound influence on my decision to be a thoracic surgeon,” said Dr. Grondin.

After finishing his general surgery residency at Dalhousie University, Dr. Grondin completed a thoracic surgery residency at the University of Toronto in Canada, where he was able to work closely with legendary surgeon F. Griffith “Griff” Pearson, MD, author of the landmark *Pearson’s Thoracic & Esophageal Surgery* textbook.

Dr. Grondin also participated in a thoracic oncology fellowship at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. During this time, he was encouraged by David J. Sugarbaker, MD, to pursue a master of clinical effectiveness degree from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts. “These studies helped advance my understanding of research methodology and improve my scientific writing abilities,” he said.

Dr. Grondin then completed a fellowship in minimally invasive thoracic surgery at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, under the supervision of James D. Luketich, MD. And after starting his clinical practice at Northwestern University in Chicago and spending a couple of years there, Dr. Grondin joined the University of

Calgary in Alberta, Canada, where he currently is professor of surgery. Previously, he was the academic and clinical head of the Department of Surgery at the University of Calgary and Alberta Health Services, which incorporates approximately 450 surgeon members and more than 1,000 employees.

An STS member since 2001, Dr. Grondin has served on numerous committees and workforces; most recently he was the Society's First Vice President. Dr. Grondin also chaired the Workforce on General Thoracic Surgery and served as the Canadian Director on the Board of Directors. In addition, he has held several senior leadership positions in other cardiothoracic surgery organizations, including the Canadian Association of Thoracic Surgeons, the Western Thoracic Surgical Association, and the JAMES IV Association of Surgeons. Dr. Grondin also was recently elected to serve on the American College of Surgeons Board of Regents.

"The experience that I have gained with STS has been invaluable," said Dr. Grondin. "As an STS task force or workforce member, you get a chance to interact with professional colleagues, discuss and debate important issues, make collaborative decisions, and implement important initiatives relevant to the future of the cardiothoracic specialty."

Dr. Grondin encourages young surgeons to not just join STS, but also to get involved in leadership through the self-nomination process. Organizations like the Society provide valuable opportunities to participate in innovative projects, foster the creation of a comprehensive network of colleagues, and develop leadership skills, he said.

As STS President, Dr. Grondin said he looks forward to working with the STS staff and is committed to furthering several goals of his predecessors, including updating the world-renowned STS National Database and providing innovative educational content to the Society's members. Dr. Grondin's agenda also includes bolstering advocacy efforts and increasing physician wellness and leadership development initiatives. In addition, he plans to build on the work of STS Past Presidents Joseph A. Dearani, MD, and Robert S.D. Higgins, MD, and advance STS equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

In collaboration with other surgical organizations, Dr. Grondin also seeks to find practical and positive ways to help STS members address changes in cardiothoracic surgery patient care occurring as a result of the pandemic.

"Although the COVID-19 pandemic is very serious and has impacted us all, it has taught us that we need to be resilient, efficient problem solvers, and that there is a strong need to pull together and support each other as we try to navigate these stressful times," said Dr. Grondin.

Along with his expertise in aspects of thoracic oncology, minimally invasive thoracic surgery, the enhancement of leadership skills for faculty members and trainees, as well as surgical workforce planning and physician wellness, Dr. Grondin has authored or co-authored more than 100 peer-reviewed journal articles and abstracts. In addition, he has participated in many presentations on these topics. Dr. Grondin also has received several honors, including the "Mentor of the Year" award from the Royal College of Physician and Surgeons of Canada.

Dr. Grondin and his wife Cathy have a son and daughter who are both studying commerce at Dalhousie

University—their parents’ alma mater. The couple enjoys hiking in the nearby mountains and spending time, whenever possible, at their cottage on Prince Edward Island in Canada.

While Dr. Grondin reluctantly shares that he is an amateur baker, he readily admits that he probably has purchased more cookbooks than he has baked pies and cakes. “I am hopeful, though, that my hobby of collecting cookbooks eventually will translate to actual baking,” he said.

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Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,500 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.