



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Anesthesiology Service Chief at
Central Alabama Veterans Health
Care System**

COM: Georgia Health Science
University

Residency Program: Oklahoma State
University College of Osteopathic
Medicine

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**Marvina
Amerson
DO, FAOCA**

**Board of Governor, Chair
Governance Committee**



What is the biggest challenge facing the field of anesthesia?

The loss of Osteopathic Residencies with the union of the ACGME

What is most rewarding about serving as a volunteer leader in the AOCA?

Being a mentor to the younger members and sharing our history of where we have been and where we are headed.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in leadership?

Make the time to make a difference. Change can be made in the positive with leaders that have heart.

The AOCA is committed to Community. How has your interaction with the College fostered your community?

I have made strong friendships through the AOCA for the last 38 years. We come together to discuss anesthesia, family, and life events.



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Bradley Barnett,
DO, MHA**

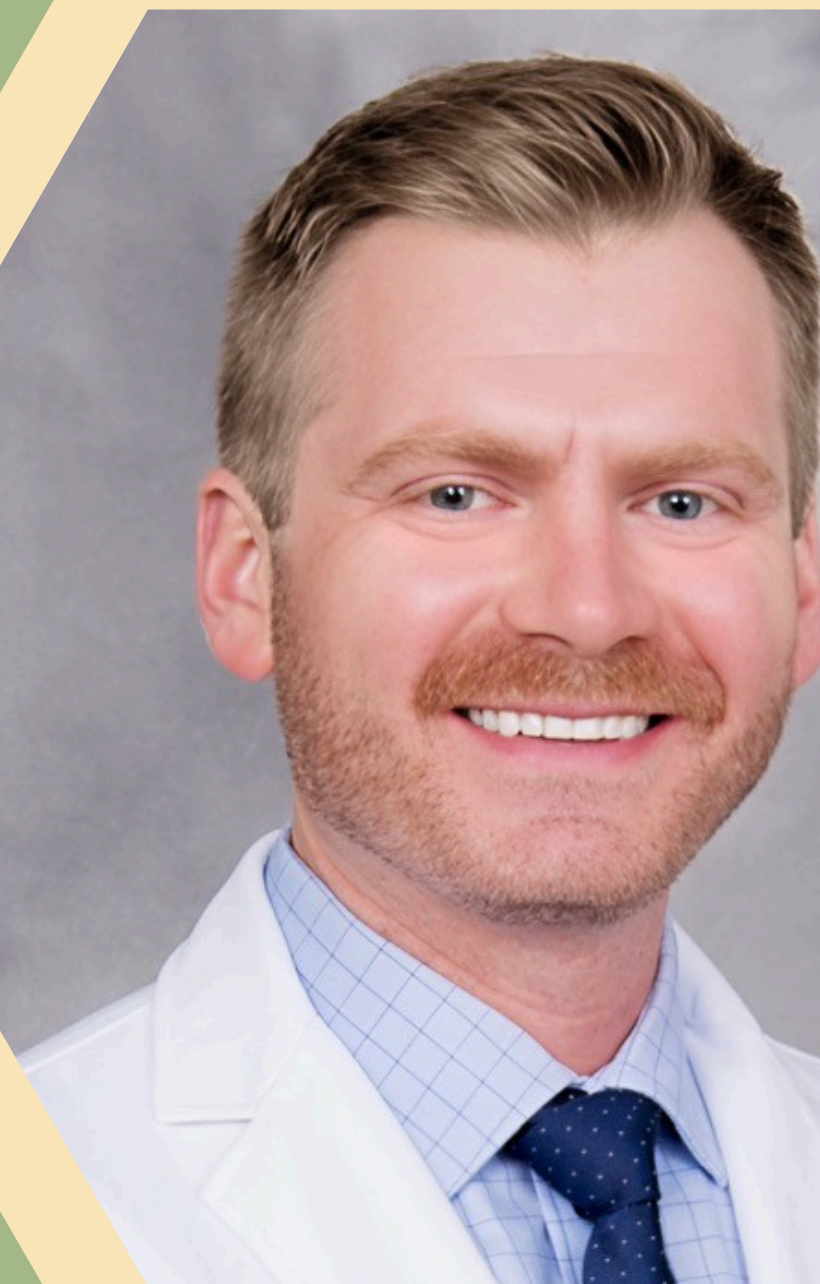
**AOCA/AOF Resident of
the Year**

Staff Anesthesiologist at
Seven Hills Anesthesia, LLC

COM: University of Pikeville
Kentucky

Residency Program:
OhioHealth Doctors
Hospital

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Can you share a specific experience or moment that inspired your interest in medicine?

Growing up with a pediatrician as my mother instilled in me a deep appreciation for the ways in which physicians touch the lives of their patients by providing both physical and emotional healing and comfort. Rounding with her in the hospital on the weekends fostered a sense of compassion and dedication that ultimately led me to pursue my career as an anesthesiologist.

What courses or subjects have you found most interesting and relevant to your medical studies?

My interest in pharmacology and pathophysiology in medical school really inspired me to pursue anesthesia as a speciality. I enjoy understanding the intricate mechanisms of disease and how pharmacological intervention can be applied to ensure safe and effective patient care.

Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

In ten years, my greatest hope is to be happy and content with my life. I have professional and personal goals for growth and development, but I also hope to find more time to enjoy life with my family and friends.

How do you stay updated with the latest developments and advancements in the medical field?

Though I have mixed feelings about social media, I believe it to be a powerful tool in remaining up to date with new recommendations and guidelines. It provides brief and digestible content, as well as newer technical skills, tips, and tricks that can be applied in my practice. It is an easy way to be guided to peer-reviewed articles and journals. I also really enjoy listening to the “Anesthesia and Critical Care Reviews and Commentary (ACCRAC)” podcast with Dr. Jed Wolpaw from Johns Hopkins.

How do you plan to continue your education and professional development throughout your career in medicine?

I really enjoy being involved with teaching medical students and residents, and it provides me with a motivation to pursue educational opportunities to remain current with evidence-based practices and new techniques that help me provide better care to patients. In addition to MOCA/CME courses, I hope to continue to learn from my colleagues and continue to read current, peer-reviewed literature.

What does it mean to you to have earned the AOCA/AOF Resident of the Year Award?

My full statement can be read on the AOCA website, but I feel very honored and humbled to have received this honor. I owe most of my growth and success in this profession to my family, teachers, mentors, colleagues, and patients. It is inspiring to be a part of a community of anesthesiologists like this one, and I hope to continue to inspire others in the same way. The monetary award was really helpful to me between the end of residency, taking boards, and starting my first attending job, so for that I am very grateful.

How do you plan to stay involved with the AOCA as you move forward on your career path?

As I get more settled into life after residency, I hope to be more involved with the AOCA. This year, I hope to be able to attend the annual Convention and Conclave in Palm Springs, and I hope to meet more people there!



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Samantha
Bunk, OMS-III**

**Future of the Field
Committee Member**

Medical School:
Kansas City University -
Kansas City

Hometown: Macomb,
Michigan

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Can you share a specific experience or moment that inspired your interest in medicine?

When I was 14 years old, I sustained a sports-related injury that required emergent surgery. That was the first time I had ever been exposed to a hospital setting. I was amazed by all the medical professionals that knew exactly what to do during such an urgent situation. The anesthesiologist on my medical team was extremely smart, empathetic, and made my entire surgical experience a positive one. That event sparked my interest in medicine and the field of anesthesia.

What courses or subjects have you found most interesting and relevant to your medical studies?

Pharmacology has been my favorite medical school subject. It is so incredible to me that we have access to such a wide variety of medications to meet various treatment goals. Memorizing and understanding the countless drug mechanisms and interactions was daunting at first but I love being able to use the knowledge base I've built to contribute to treatment plans while on clerkships.

Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

In 10 years, I see myself working as a general anesthesiologist with involvement in the education of medical students and residents.

How do you plan to stay involved with the AOCA as you move forward on your career path?

I plan to continue volunteering my time on committees and attending conferences as I enter my last year of medical school and transition to residency. As an attending, I plan to continue participating in AOCA events in the hope that I can support medical students and residents in the same way I have been supported while part of this organization.

Fun Fact

One of my favorite hobbies is hiking and I plan to complete an Advanced Wilderness Life Support course as part of my fourth-year medical school education.



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Melissa Byrne,
DO, MPH, FASA**

**Co-Chair Future of the
Field Committee**

Clinical Assistant Professor,
Associate Program Director, &
Director of POCUS at
University of Michigan

COM: Michigan State University
Residency Program: University
of Michigan Anesthesiology



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Could you tell us about your journey within the College and what led you to your current role?

I have been seeking opportunities to engage with the osteopathic community of anesthesiologists and obtain CME for my state medical license that was relevant to my interests and high-quality. I was asked to present at the annual conference and have since taken on more roles to increase our outreach to future members.

How do you stay updated with the latest industry trends and best practices in anesthesia?

I regularly read journals and engage in resident and fellow education. Additionally, I am an avid user of X (formerly Twitter). I love attending the Annual Conclave to gain broader perspective on other hot topics that are outside my subspecialty that I might not be as familiar with but are relevant to my practice.

What motivates and inspires you in your day-to-day work life, and how do you maintain enthusiasm and passion for your work as an anesthesiologist?

In the past few years, I have been focused on finding wellness and satisfaction at work; I find that I am much more connected to patients, trainees and colleagues by sharing my passion for education with others. Bedside ultrasound (whether regional or point-of-care ultrasound) is a unique opportunity to demonstrate value with our patients and our procedural colleagues while affording me the avenue to teach a procedural skill to trainees at all levels that I find most rewarding.

Fun Fact

Most people are surprised to learn that I once got the chance to cheer for NFL Monday Night Football while in high school!



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Raymond Depa,
DO, FAOCA**

**Nominating Committee
Chair**

Physician Anesthesiologist and
Managing Member of Kentucky
Anesthesia Group, PSC

COM: Des Moines University

Residency Program: University
of Arizona, College of Medicine,
Department of Anesthesiology

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What is the biggest challenge facing the field of anesthesia?

Recruiting additional staff to meet the increased surgical demands at the hospitals we are contracted with has become very difficult. The supply for anesthesia professionals in our area is very tight and the demand is incredibly high. Second, we continue to see a precipitous decline in reimbursement for our professional services. These two issues combined have created a very difficult private practice environment from a business perspective.

What is most rewarding about serving as a volunteer leader in the AOCA?

I have been a proud AOCA member for 20 years. It has always been a part of my career and it is an honor to serve in an organization that has provided so much to my family and to me.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in leadership?

Jump In! The entire organization is very welcoming and every member of the AOCA has something to offer to help ensure the long-term success of our College. Whether you want to serve on a committee or on the Board of Governors, you have talents that the organization needs to continue to be successful. It is very fulfilling, professionally, knowing that your service to the College will make a difference for the next generation of physician anesthesiologists.

The AOCA is committed to Community. How has your interaction with the College fostered your community?

I truly value the family atmosphere that exists at every College function. I always feel welcomed when I attend the in-person events. I genuinely feel like I belong. Many of my professional friends that I have, I have met through AOCA in-person events over the past two decades. There is no other national organization that I belong to that has created the type of long-lasting friendships that I have created by attending AOCA in-person events. I am truly grateful to be part of this community.

Can you please give us a little more insight into your DSA Award?

I never imagined receiving the AOCA Distinguished Service Award. It has been one of the greatest honors in my professional career. I believe I received the award because of my work serving on the American Osteopathic Board of Anesthesiologists and as the Chair of the American Osteopathic Association Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS).

The BOS serves as the certifying body for all AOA specialties and subspecialties. It has been in existence for over 80 years. The bureau establishes and maintains the high standards for board certification, ensuring that AOA board-certified physicians demonstrate expertise and competence in their area of specialization. We certify nearly 100,000 board certified osteopathic physicians.

Along with the hard work and determination of many people and during my time as Chair, the BOS modernized the board certification process by transitioning all high-stakes exams to remote proctored platforms without disrupting the validity of the exam. This eliminated travel costs, time away from work, and made the certification process more efficient for the candidate.

In addition, we changed the specialty re-certification process by enhancing and simplifying the physician user experience. For specialty re-certification, we eliminated the high stakes 10 year re-certification exams and transitioned this process to a more user friendly and relevant longitudinal assessment system that can be completed on your mobile device.

We are now working on enhancing the subspecialty exams. We developed a separate Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment certification for any AOA certified physician who wants to add this unique level of distinction to their primary specialty certificate. Finally, we developed a reciprocity program, where any ABMS certified DO in good standing can transition their ABMS board certification to an AOA board certification. This has been met with great success as we welcome back home our colleagues who choose to now distinguish themselves through osteopathic board certification.



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Michael
Fabbro, DO,
FAOCA

Committee Member, Past
Program Chair

Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology
University of Miami

Current Role in the AOCA:
Committee Chair, Strategic Support

Residency Program: University of
Pennsylvania



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What is the biggest challenge facing the field of anesthesia?

Rising salaries, diminishing reimbursements.

What is most rewarding about serving as a volunteer leader in the AOCA?

Networking with like-minded individuals.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in leadership?

Ask for opportunities and when you get them, put in 100%.

The AOCA is committed to Community. How has your interaction with the College fostered your community?

I have met so many people from medical students to deans, who I consider friends and colleagues for my career and beyond.



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Pediatric Anesthesia Fellow
Boston Children's Hospital

COM: William Carey COM
Residency Program: Mayo Clinic

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Nicole Henry, DO, MBA, MPH

AOCA/AOF Resident of the
Year, 1st Resident Member
of BOG



What is the biggest challenge facing the field of anesthesia?

I believe the biggest challenge facing the field of anesthesia is the overall shortage of anesthesiologists and anesthesia providers. Though the field has gained great popularity, there are still not enough of us to keep up with the post COVID surgical demand, overwhelming expansion of health care systems and hospitals, alongside the retirement of those that have practiced for years. Additionally, I fear the shortage of fellowship trained anesthesiologists will continue to dwindle in light of residents avoiding fellowship training secondary to a lucrative general market

What is most rewarding about serving as a volunteer leader in the AOCA?

Learning about how important AOCA is to the DO community and anesthesia community. I remember, helping at the booth during the MARC conference this past year and it was great to hear about other DO anesthesia residents experiences and hear of their career goals alongside networking. It was a great opportunity to educate our allopathic colleagues about AOCA, for which many made sure to pass along our information to their DO colleagues for involvement. Similarly, another meaningful experience included speaking with medical students about how exciting the field of anesthesia is and what it means to be a DO in anesthesia, given I believe that representation matters.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in leadership?

Do not be afraid to reach out, ask questions and get involved. There are so many opportunities available that need committed people. We are always happy to figure out how best to support someone

The AOCA is committed to Community. How has your interaction with the College fostered your community?

Interaction with the College has strengthened my sense of community among DO anesthesiologists. Upon attending the VAPOR conference and meeting fellow BOG members, I have learned a great deal about the field, the importance of our presence in the anesthesia community, and the importance of presence and support among fellow DOs, DO trainees and medical students.

What does it mean to you to have earned the AOCA/AOF Resident of the Year Award?

This was one of the most meaningful awards I have ever received as I came to learn it reflected what others can accomplish as a minority, as a DO and while in training.

How do you plan to stay involved with the AOCA as you move forward on your career path?

Upon graduating from fellowship, I plan to join the BOG as a full member given I want to still be apart of ensuring AOCA meets the needs of the DO community, anesthesiologists, trainees and those interested in anesthesia.



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Suzanne Huffnagle
DO, FAOCA, FASA

Board of Governor, DSA
Recipient,
Chair Awards & Honors &
Scholarly Activities
Committees

**Clinical Professor of Anesthesiology &
Obstetrics & Gynecology at Thomas
Jefferson University Hospital**

COM: PCOM

Residency Program: Thomas Jefferson
University Hospital (Sidney Kimmel
Medical College)



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What is the biggest challenge facing the field of anesthesia?

I think that we, as anesthesia providers, face many challenges today and one of them is not to lose our identity in the medical field. I work at an allopathic institution and our best clinicians are the osteopaths in our department, hands down.

What is most rewarding about serving as a volunteer leader in the AOCA?

Serving on committees and on the BOG is so rewarding because my efforts help to better our college and continue to make it stand out among other anesthesia organizations. I have seen the AOCA grow and become a very professional organization that has much to give to its members and the anesthesia community. For instance, when the Scholarly Activities Committee started out, we just chose the best article sent in by our residents and gave that author an award. We have come so far that we now rival our larger counterparts with medical student and resident presentations that promote their hard work and teach us all vital medical research and difficult anesthesia case management.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in leadership?

Please make your interest known. You will not regret it. This organization is welcoming and very willing to promote your efforts at every turn. You will grow professionally and personally through that volunteering. You will learn leadership skills and you will truly make a change for the better.

The AOCA is committed to Community. How has your interaction with the College fostered your community?

I have learned so much being a member of the AOCA and the BOG. I have developed leadership skills, and I feel that in my retirement years, I will be able to serve my community and my church community better. I was asked a long time ago to be on the board of directors of my church and I turned them down as I lacked the knowledge and skills to be a good representative of our congregation, but now I feel that I can serve in that capacity if I am asked again. I have also learned how to ask people to help me with projects without being overly intimidated and shy. I have gained confidence and communication skills that have made me a better, more well-rounded person.



AOCA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Tamara Stojilkovic

Student Member, AOCA
Board of Governors

Medical School:

Kansas City University

Year in Medical School:

Fourth year

Hometown: Phoenix, Arizona

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Can you share a specific experience or moment that inspired your interest in medicine?

My dad was a nurse, and always would share his stories at dinner time. This sparked my interest to seek out a career in medicine.

What courses or subjects have you found most interesting and relevant to your medical studies?

Pharmacology and physiology

Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

I hope to be a cardiothoracic anesthesiologist, who continues to be involved in education

Fun fact:

I have been ice climbing in Iceland!