

RJOS PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH 2019

Thank you, Alexe for the introduction. I look forward to the next year as we continue to fulfill our mission with our current programs and adding even more. Alexe has done an extraordinary job on every front and has returned us to financial stability. A remarkable leader, she was also President of the California Orthopaedic Society at the same time as serving as our President. Our program chair, Dori; the board, committee chairs; and volunteers have generated an unparalleled level of activity and productivity. Our extraordinary capable staff, Amy Sherwood and Deb Meyer, have supported us and participated with every step. With your help, we are going to build on this and add more member benefits, including web resources and position papers.

You just heard about my personal and career journey. Let me focus on the RJOS. I was an RJOS resident member and then a full member *for only a few years*. I left the society early in my career. *It didn't seem relevant*. Several years ago, Sheila Algan lead a sweeping membership drive. She strongly encouraged me "to come home." Sheila is the embodiment of RJOS relevance. I joined and then volunteered for the Scientific Committee. Before I knew it, I was treasurer and then Vice President. Now I am truly honored to be your President. At times like these, we share successes. What we don't always share are the blind alleys and brick walls. I want to emphasize that no success occurs without hardship and failures. In retrospect, I sincerely wish *that I had not ever left RJOS*. I would have benefitted from RJOS during tough times and for mentorship. At one point in my military career, there were only 2 women orthopaedic surgeons (1%) in the entire U.S. Navy. RJOS is in YOUR CORNER. RJOS IS RELEVANT. RJOS provides networking, professional development, mentorship, leadership opportunities, grants, and, importantly, friendship. Recently we have encouraged men to join us.

The goal was not to make them feel like minorities (even though they are tonight) but rather to have them share with us women and future women orthopaedic surgeons the unique and fulfilling experience of being part of a larger whole, the RJOS. RJOS as a society and our individual members are uniquely positioned to assist you in your practice, your career, and your life. We want your story to be a successful one in which you define success. Share your RJOS story, especially with prospective members.

Over the past several years movements have surfaced in social media, professional organizations, and academia. Some are very positive such as the *#I look like a surgeon* which have educated vast numbers. The National Organization for Women remains strong and vocal. *Times up and #metoo* have collectively spoken up about a myriad of workplace issues including harassment, abuse, and aggression. We at RJOS are working within our parent organization of the AAOS and as our own independent entity. We are stepping up our game to be a louder voice and joining with other groups to be treated fairly in a safe work place. Our namesake, Ruth Jackson, would be proud of her society's record on promoting and supporting women orthopaedists. Since its founding in 1983 by six women, RJOS continues as the leader in orthopaedics on this front.

In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to let the gifted contralto Marian Anderson perform at Constitution Hall because she was black. Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt arranged for her to sing at the Lincoln Memorial. 75,000 were in attendance for this historic event. What did Ms. Anderson learn?

"Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it." *Marian Anderson*

RJOS and I are listening, and we understand. I want to know if you think we are faltering.

This year is a banner year for the AAOS, incorporated in 1933. Its first female member was Ruth Jackson, also the first female to be an ABOS Diplomate. Past RJOS President Kristy Weber will be *the first female orthopaedic surgeon to be AAOS President in 86 years*. Her experiences with RJOS will, no doubt, help frame her presidency. We all celebrate her presidency. She will be representing us. How fitting it is that March is Women's History Month? I propose that we take this occasion to celebrate you. This is usually the time during a speech where the dismal statistics and slow growth of women in orthopaedics are presented. Multiple theories and models exist as to the cause. Know that the Dept of Labor and Statistics groups jobs that are traditionally female and traditionally male. Women orthopaedists constitute about the same percentage as female firefighters, commercial airline pilots and heads of major Fortune 500 corporations. *These low percentages and glass ceiling is not unique to orthopaedics*. I'd like you to consider this: By virtue of our small percentages, every day we go to work we are leaders. Whether in the OR, Clinic, your community, or in your family, you are a leader. Let's look at ourselves and realize that each one of us is a leader. Each one of us has "firsts" in our lives. You have made substantive contributions to myriads of people. You are making a difference. Know that only with our continued drive to encourage young women to train in orthopaedics and to support women surgeons at ALL stages of their careers, we will not achieve our potential. RJOS, the Perry Initiative, Nth Dimensions, The Gladden Society, and Orthopaedics in Action all actively support young women going into orthopaedics. If we continue to lose women, who make up more than 50% of medical school classes, to other specialties, the entire field of orthopaedics and our patients will suffer. In 2016, ½ of NASA's entering class of astronauts was female. An all-female space-walk will happen later this month. 14% of all active duty military and orthopaedic residents in training are female. Diversity matters. Diversity makes a difference. If we continue to be successful with adding more women to orthopaedic surgery, RJOS will evolve into something different than today. RJOS of 1983 is not the same as today. We are a proactive and responsive organization.

For those of you who volunteer your time, we on the Board thank you. For those of you who donate, we thank you for your financial support. If you are not able to actively participate, please consider a donation, no matter how small. We thank our sponsors Zimmer and XXX without whom we would not have our grants. Take our mission statement: "Promote professional development of and for women in orthopaedics throughout all stages of their careers." I ask that you think about what RJOS means to you. Apply it to you. Get those words off the page and in action. We need your ideas, suggestions, and participation *to stay relevant to you*.

In closing, I'd like to ask: Who and what are the obstacles? Let's work together so we can dismantle those obstacles that hinder careers, professional growth, and personal lives. We are orthopaedic surgeons. We fix things. We can fix this too.

Thank you.
Marlene DeMaio, MD
RJOS President