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Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society  
9400 W Higgins Road  
Suite 500  
Rosemont, IL 60018

**Re: RJOS He for She Award**

October 15, 2019

Dear Selection Committee:

I would like to nominate **Mark Baratz MD** for the *Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society (RJOS) He for She Award*. Dr. Mark Baratz epitomizes the qualities this award recognizes and I can think of no individual more deserving of this award, as I hope to illustrate in this letter.

**Mark Baratz is an open advocate for women in orthopaedics.**

Mark actively seeks out opportunities to be inclusive of women and other underrepresented minorities in orthopaedics, including sponsoring them for leadership and speaking positions, mentoring them through career and personal life, and makes a specific and concerted effort to promote women in orthopaedics.

When Mark puts together a program for a national hand or orthopaedic meeting, he specifically seeks faculty that are women and underrepresented minorities to assure that the faculty is representative of our patients and the population in general; by doing so, he addresses gender and racial parity in orthopaedic and hand surgery. Most surgeons who are involved in program development are much more focused upon simply getting a “best known” or a “friend” or the “same old speakers” in the program. However, Mark not only puts together a dynamic faculty who are knowledgeable and good speakers, he pays attention to getting people who may not be in the usual speaker circuit – increasing the diversity of faculty and providing opportunities, especially to women and underrepresented minorities.

Mark has actively developed programming focusing on gender issues in orthopedic and hand surgery, and has made this a focus of the professional organizations he has been in. He challenges gender and racial stereotypes in a gentle and winning way, and asks the hard questions of others when these factors are not addressed. He has established a book club for the fellows to read about subjects outside of hand surgery. A recent choice was “The Confidence Code”, which discusses the paradox that women are increasingly better educated and more qualified, but men still predominate leadership roles in the corporate world. The authors make the case that differences in confidence between men and women are responsible for the divide, and espouse a way forward to close this gap. Many female fellows will have the opportunity to learn from the book; and male fellows have the opportunity to understand the barriers their female co-fellows face.

### **Mark Baratz exhibits continued support, mentoring, and sponsorship for women.**

Mark has *formally* mentored easily over 2 dozen women in orthopaedic and hand surgery as faculty and a residency and fellowship director. However, the number of women he has mentored, sponsored and supported *outside of a formal teacher- trainee relationship* is far beyond that number! He is a member of Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society and, in his leadership roles at Allegheny then University of Pittsburgh, and in the AAHS, ASSH, and AAOS, he has continually supported, mentored, and sponsored women in a conscious and deliberate fashion. He actively seeks to pair up women in training with women who can mentor them in specific areas of their life. This is a remarkable achievement; Mark specifically seeks to understand and be aware of facets of these women's lives and how it impacts their professional life. He not only personally provides support to them, but also facilitates relationship building to expand the trainee's network of support. I refer you to the words of his mentees and colleagues below, in order understand what a powerful influence he is upon advancing women in orthopedic surgery.

I myself have never trained under Mark Baratz, but certainly he has touched my personal and professional life and I now count him as a friend and mentor. I first met Mark Baratz in 2008 when I was attending a meeting at which he spoke. He and I rode together in the shuttle to the airport. I am certain he had emails to read or phone calls to make on that shuttle ride, or he could have just relaxed and kept quiet on that ride. But he didn't. Mark took the time to talk to me; ask about who I was, what I wanted to do in my career. It was amazing to a young hand fellow to find that a famous elbow and hand surgeon was interested in me and my career! Since then, Mark has become a friend and trusted colleague. He has stood by me with clinical questions, personal triumphs and tragedies, and tough decisions about life and work. He has put me on the podium and supported my career; he has given me life advice and has celebrated successes and helped me move forward from disappointments. I have also seen the same behavior play out, time and time again, as Mark has become a friend and mentor to women in orthopaedic surgery. Mark seeks to meet people where they are and help them along their journeys; he has been a mentor and sponsor to so many women in orthopaedics.

### **Mark Baratz is a forward-minded and inclusive thinker.**

When he was President of the American Association for Hand Surgery (AAHS), Mark sponsored a symposium on Women in Hand Surgery, which served as an opportunity for networking and relationship building, and was well attended by men and women; this sparked discussion and relationships which have improved the AAHS as well as orthopedic and hand surgery.

At the 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Society of the Surgery of the Hand (ASSH), Mark recently was honored with the David Green Mentorship Award, given to an individual who exemplifies mentorship. As part of this award, he was asked to put together an instructional course lecture (ICL). As an accomplished and internationally known hand and upper extremity surgeon, he could easily have put together an ICL on a surgical topic, which would be well received and well attended. Instead, his choice was to put together an ICL including a diverse faculty including women and individuals of color, and bring forward frank discussion about diversity of gender, color, background, sexual orientation and other factors.

I have often been on speaker panels with Mark or in the audience. He always gives a well organized and well thought out talk, and humbly shares his knowledge and even his mistakes so that others can learn. He recently spoke on the Women in Hand Surgery Panel at the 2019 ASSH Annual Meeting. As the only man on the panel, he was humble, open, and wanted to learn from the panel and audience. He also shared some things he had learned and in doing so, exhibited vulnerability about how he was brought to understand what it means for a woman surgeon who is breastfeeding and bringing a pump to work or to an academic meeting, struggling to meet expectations as a surgeon, resident or fellow, and yet do this thing that is important for one's child or children. He discussed that this started with how he had a frank discussion with a fellow asking if there was anything that could be done in the fellowship to improve their experiences. He then learned about the struggle this fellow had to meet the scheduling expectations of her fellowship but also provide for her child. Mark shared how he now asks every fellow and resident if there is anything that may interfere with training or need to be accommodated during their training. In this way, Mark does not single anyone out, but allows an open conversation to understand and help mentor trainees to do what they need to do. He has this conversation with men and women and has found that some men have struggles or need accommodations too – caring for a sick

family member, or dealing with personal issues. It was at this moment that I realized that by making a concerted effort to improve things for *women*, Mark has improved conditions for *ALL* his fellows, men and women, and has made a true difference. By sharing this experience from the podium and with other residency and fellowship faculty and directors, he has had a positive influence upon training programs in the United States and beyond.

In addition to advancing the cause of women in orthopaedics, Mark is simply a good person who seeks to improve the world in general and the world of orthopaedics; he is truly a humanitarian and a forward minded and inclusive thinker. His presidential talk at AAHS in 2013 was about finding joy in life, and being an advocate for understanding that there is life outside of one's work. Mark shares generously and freely of his time, his finances, and his expertise. He has served as a volunteer in the Touching Hands and Guatemalan Healing Hands organizations, both of which are devoted to providing hand care to the underserved in disadvantaged nations. He was instrumental in creating the "Lean and Green Award" from the AAHS, given annually to an AAHS member who works to decrease medical waste and promote environmental awareness and protect our planet. Mark is active in advocacy and supporting the rights of people who have been marginalized in the past.

Lastly, I would like to share some words about Mark Baratz from some of the women who he has mentored, and some of his women colleagues who have observed him over the past several years to decades, written below (with their permission). These words reflect truly upon this remarkable individual and come from women who are in private practice, still in training, and those that have achieved the pinnacle of academic success; surgeons from both coasts and the heartland; and women in all stages and walks of life. Their common thread is the impact from knowing one incredible human being who has positively influenced their lives. I hope you consider Mark Baratz MD for the RJOS *He for She Award*.

Sincerely,



Julie Adams MD

*"Dr Baratz has taken every opportunity to encourage women in the field, gives women the same opportunities as the males, and continues to work to have our voices be heard. I have always felt that he appreciates mine and other female surgeons' viewpoint. It is not an exclusion of men in anyway, it is an inclusion of men and women as equals and colleagues in its truest form. I consider him a friend, a colleague, and a mentor forever. My career would not be the same without his support and his unique effort in getting to know the lives of his fellows. After my fellowship I got married and he didn't hesitate to fly across the country with the other fellow to attend. In historical ortho, I imagine they didn't want to hear about your wedding or family.....it is the exact opposite for Dr Baratz. He recognizes that it is the whole person that makes the surgeon and your outside life matters greatly to him. These things may sound minor, but that is what a woman surgeon is: we often play a larger role in soccer coach, carpool person, mom, school helper etc. This is the reality for many female surgeons and he taught me I could do both.....and I did... (Heidi Shors MD)*

*"I was fortunate to train with Dr. Baratz for a fellowship year 2015-2016. I unfortunately came from a very malignant and abusive ortho residency and almost left orthopedics/medicine...because of my experience in residency. When I started training with Dr. Baratz I was very insecure with my clinical and operative skills and always triple guessed myself with everything I did....made for a very awkward intraoperative experience with me for sure. I truly just didn't think I was good enough to be a surgeon because that was all I heard, amongst additional expletives, during my residency training. I had a heart to heart with Dr. Baratz and explained why I was acting the way I was and he honestly took me under his wing and supported me not only*

*throughout my year from a clinical standpoint however also from an emotional standpoint as a quintessential mentor and role model. He is likely one of the main reasons I am still in orthopedics today. “ (Carmella Fernandez MD)*

*“I cannot think of a single person more deserving of the RJOS He for She award than my mentor, Dr. Mark E. Baratz, MD. To this day, training under Mark has been the greatest privilege of my professional career. I still recall his words on my first day of fellowship: ‘If you give me 100% for one year, I’ll give you 100% for the rest of your life.’ He has been true to his words, and even though it’s been 10 years since I finished my training, I still have him on speed dial. Sometimes I call on him with questions on patient management or the technical execution of a procedure, but just as often I call him for general life advice. He was there for me on my wedding day, He supported me when I took the leap of starting my own solo practice. Mark’s support and promotion of women in orthopedics is effortless and genuine. He is a true leader for gender parity in our specialty”. (Veronica Diaz MD)*

*“Dr. Baratz has consistently and persistently supported women at his peer level as colleagues and leaders. He has actively supported women as medical students, residents, fellows, and young career surgeons. He serves as a role model, a diversity educator, a fan of women who make a difference. He started the “women in surgery” series with a panel at AAHS meeting about 5 years ago, and has been able to spin that off into multiple meeting formats and venues - I know of ASSH, Snowmass meeting, and AAHS to name a few, I am sure there are more. Dr. Baratz actively seeks women as speakers at his institution at Pitt, in the past at Allegheny, and organizes symposia regardless of topic but is conscientious to include women across the board. He embodies the concept of a diverse field creates better decisions and collective wisdom. I can’t think of anyone more deserving of this position.” (Amy Ladd MD)*

*“I never had any training directly with Dr. Baratz, however, I have been the beneficiary of his mentorship....He has always shown genuine interest in knowing how I am doing as well as what I doing. He treats me the same as any other male colleague, and truly cares about my professional development and equity in the workplace. He also genuinely cares about the non-hand surgery part of life including hobbies, family and making time for oneself. He is a true role model for men and women in hand surgery.” (Rajshri Bolson MD)*

*“Dr Baratz is one of the best mentors I have ever met. Not only for me or for women, but anyone who works with him. He takes time with all of his fellows to know them on a personal level and truly cares about our lives. He listens to what we say, creates a safe environment for expressing challenges and is truly interested committed to helping us be successful both professionally and personally. He supports both men and women, but he understands that women are coming from a place of disadvantage in a male-dominated profession and a culture that considers qualities associated with leadership to be unfeminine.” (Debra Bourne MD)*

*“Mark was and advocate of diversity, equity and inclusion before it was popular or even talked about very much. I can remember early in my career that Mark was someone that I considered a mentor as he took an interest in wanting to provide opportunity. Most recently, he has been a trusted friend and advisor as I went through the process of obtaining an academic Chair position. He reached out to me to offer his support and advice. He has filled the role of mentor and friend to countless women surgeons in our profession. He truly understands the role that men need to play in order to achieve true diversity in our field.” (Lisa Lattanza MD)*

*“I am a new mother and currently pumping, and there was a recent graduate who had a baby beginning of last year and also pumped throughout the fellowship. Upon learning what we had to go through, Dr. Baratz initiated an one-on-one entrance interview for all the fellows to have an opportunity early on to discuss any professional or personal needs that can be accommodated during training. He also asked us to draft a fellowship policy on maternity or any other medical leave/pumping, because he felt that this is an important issue that needs to be openly addressed. I would say that is very ‘forward minded, inclusive thinker’”. (Hannah Lee MD)*

*“I ... support Dr. Baratz for the "He for She" award. He was my mentor during residency.... Dr. Baratz has*

*an extraordinary passion for orthopedics and resident/fellow education. What sets him above is how much he cares about the life and well being of everyone he mentors. He was someone I could approach with questions about my personal life and its affect on my work life without fear of judgment. He is supportive and creates a community of openness and inquisitiveness for everyone - men and women alike. He would routinely go out of his way to give personal invitations to attend labs, journal clubs, conferences, and evening dinners to anyone with an interest and as such, I never felt like I was in the minority as a woman. I know many women in my residency, myself included, appreciate how welcoming and accessible he is. In his presence, I never once wondered if I was being treated differently because I am a woman. I could not think of a better champion for women's equality. " (Julie Johnson Roberts MD)*

*"I believe Dr. Baratz exceeds the criteria for the He for She Award.... he makes it known not only by words but also by his actions that he supports me. He has done extensive reading to understand the particular challenges that a physician and a surgeon face as a woman. This year alone, he has started a book club for the fellowship (and he extended this to some of the residents as well), and, not surprisingly, the first book that he chose for us to read is the "Confidence Code" which delves into the confidence gap between men and women. In addition to this, he has introduced me to other orthopaedic surgeons who are women, and has tried to catalyze interest in orthopedics in women from an early age. He was the faculty member at Pitt who got the ball rolling to get the Perry Initiative at Carnegie Mellon. A couple of years ago, he was the speaker at one of our dinners for Women in Orthopaedics and spoke directly how we should approach job interviews and how we should advocate for ourselves to establish terms in our contracts that were at least equal to our male counterparts. On a more personal level, I have felt that Dr. Baratz has served a critical role in helping me progress in my career. It is through his encouragement, mentorship, and actions, that I applied for and will be attending a competitive hand fellowship." (Jennifer D'Auria MD)*