

## Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award



The Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award honors program directors who find innovative ways to teach residents and fellows, and to provide quality health care while remaining connected to the initial impulse to care for others in this environment. Parker J. Palmer is the author of the book *The Courage to Teach*; his promotion of the concept of “living divided no more” has proven relevant to teaching in academic health centers.



### **Vance Y. Sohn, MD, FACS, FSSO**

Surgery  
Madigan Army Medical Center  
Tacoma, Washington

#### **Nominators had this to say:**

"In the midst of our nation's longest ongoing armed conflict, Dr Sohn has transformed the residency to excel to not only meet the goals of the ACGME, but also to meet the needs of our military. Despite the toll of high faculty turnover because of deployments, a congressionally mandated transformation of the military healthcare system, and numerous other changes to the organization, Dr Sohn has continued to lead as a strategic, visionary educator and surgeon."

"He has redesigned the educational curriculum, enriched the operative experience, and cultivated an educational environment that promotes lifelong learning. His impact is undeniable; a 100 percent first time board pass rate for the QE and CE over the prior 10 years, 20 percent increase in total operative cases including a x5 increase in operative trauma, significant increase in research funding and publications, and nearly 50 percent of residents have consistently scored in top 10 percent on the annual ABSITE for the past six years."

"Recognizing the value of interprofessional practice in patient outcomes, Dr. Sohn emphasized the routine integration of nursing and resident education, from morning report to grand rounds. After seeing the success of the resident-led quality improvement program at another institution, he led the establishment of a similar thriving resident and nursing-led program at Madigan, addressing a broad range of patient-centric issues, from hand hygiene to opioid prescription practices. Dr. Sohn's creative and dedicated spirit has fostered a dynamic educational environment embracing a multi-disciplinary approach emphasizing the shared roles and responsibilities required for optimal patient outcomes and the education of the medical learner."

“Over the subsequent six years as his resident, I have had the tremendous privilege of watching Dr. Sohn live out the above values. If adversity sheds light on the best of our strongest leaders, then the years of 2015-2021 have been the crucible that allowed Dr. Sohn to shine. With sage wisdom and creativity, he postured our program in a way that would prove resilient to countless problems that threatened the strength of our training: restructuring of the Military Health System, adoption of a new electronic health record, tragic family emergencies, and the pandemic. Each problem threatened the acuity, volume, and density of resident surgical training, but Dr. Sohn artfully anticipated each problem. He built long-lasting relationships with surrounding hospital systems, finding the best training opportunities available for us to hone our clinical skills. As a result, we have graduated some of our strongest trainees during Dr. Sohn's tenure.”

“Despite his numerous achievements as program director, what stands out to me most is how Dr. Sohn has embraced the role of mentor. Personally, he has helped me navigate everything from mastery of surgical technique to the compassionate dealing of complications, to strengthening relationships with colleagues as well as my loved ones. Because Dr. Sohn served and led in the manner that he did, I now have a role model to emulate, and I have inspiration for how I wish to treat my own mentees.”