

In gratitude

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Serving as *AJOG's* Editor-in-Chief for gynecology for the past 5 years has been a true privilege.

I am grateful to so many integral people who have been involved in this endeavor: my fellow editors, past editors that I've been honored to work closely with, our managing editors and publisher, and most of all, our authors and reviewers. I'd like to spend a moment acknowledging each.

As most readers are aware, *AJOG* has long had a tradition of having two editors-in-chief, one focused on obstetrics and the other on gynecology. This enables each to oversee the discipline with which she or he is most familiar. However, as a urogynecologist, I must admit that several decades had elapsed since I last thought much about the other areas within gynecology. I have enjoyed rekindling my knowledge about topics from ovarian cancer to endometriosis to assisted reproductive technologies to pelvic pain and many more. However, my expertise in these areas is, of course, not at the level of a subspecialist and to that end I have been so fortunate to work with our team of dedicated and insightful associate editors for gynecology: Drs Valerie Baker (Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility), Catherine Bradley (Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery), Larry Copeland (Gynecologic Oncology) and Deputy Editor Dr Jeffrey Peipert (Family Planning and Infectious Disease).

Three of the associate editors for gynecology with whom I have had the pleasure to work deserve special mention because they have stepped down from *AJOG* during my tenure. Dr Richard Bump retired from *AJOG* after 16 years; I was most fortunate to work with and learn from him during the first 2 years of my appointment. His many accomplishments were highlighted in an editorial in 2015.¹ His 1996 manuscript describing the Pelvic Organ Prolapse Quantification system remains the most highly cited of all papers published in *AJOG*.²

AJOG's previous editors-in-chief, Drs Tom Garite and Moon Kim, brilliantly appointed two obstetric/gynecologist specialists in 2008, Drs Todd Jenkins and Maureen Phipps, to solicit and edit review-type manuscripts. Dr Jenkins is the Division Director of Women's Reproductive Healthcare at the University of Alabama, holds an MS degree in Health Care Administration, and is active in the Society for Academic

Specialists in General Obstetrics and Gynecology. When we first spoke in 2013, he told me, "People usually don't write for the 44,000 readers of *AJOG*; they write for the 100 people in their own area." He set out to change this by soliciting and editing and, indeed, writing clinically relevant—and very highly read—reviews on topics most important to practicing clinicians. Dr Jenkins was an integral person in the gynecology manuscripts review process, in which our team of gynecology editors weekly reviews all manuscripts potentially considered for revision. His cogent, perceptive, and practical suggestions improved so many manuscripts and made them interesting and relevant to our 44,000 readers. Dr Jenkins shared his time and expertise with *AJOG* until last year, when competing commitments pulled him away.

Dr Jenkins's partner in handling reviews, Dr Maureen Phipps, is Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Brown University, assistant dean for teaching and research in women's health, and Professor of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health. She has been a member of the US Preventive Services Task Force since 2014 and has served as chair of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee on Healthcare for Underserved Women. Her strong research and clinical interests in providing culturally appropriate healthcare for underserved women dovetailed well with Dr Jenkins's research and interest in health policy and transformation. Together, this dynamic duo ensured that every issue of *AJOG* contained high-quality reviews on topics that spanned the breadth and depth of our specialty. After Dr Jenkins's departure from *AJOG*, Dr Phipps transitioned into handling special features for *AJOG*, such as Viewpoint and Call to Action manuscripts. Now, celebrating her 10-year anniversary with the Journal, she has elected to step down to create space for new challenges.

All three of these sagacious and sharp editors contributed so much to *AJOG* over the past one to two decades and, in particular, to me during my tenure with *AJOG*.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my co—Editor-in-Chief for Obstetrics, Dr Roberto Romero. For the last 5 years, Dr Romero and I have held weekly telephone meetings to strategize *AJOG's* future, plan new features, discuss changes to the Journal, debate controversial manuscripts, carefully consider allegations of misconduct, and much more. Before embarking on this editorship, I was well aware of Dr Romero's significant body of research. Through our conversations since then, I have enjoyed learning more about so many areas a gynecologist generally thinks nothing of, from vaginal progesterone to microbiota to preterm labor, but as interestingly, about some of Dr Romero's wide range of interests, from art to photography to philosophy. He is one of the most dedicated, focused, informed, and insightful individuals I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

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My life is richer for having had the opportunity to serve as co-Editor-in-Chief with him, and *AJOG's* life will continue to be richer for having him stay on in this role.

What a luxury it is to start as a new editor-in-chief for a journal and to have two highly experienced editorial managers already on board! Together, Donna Stroud and Sandy Perrine have over one-half a century of unflagging service to *AJOG*. Donna, in Ohio, and Sandy, in Arizona, touch every manuscript (though now virtually!), assign them to editors, interface with authors and reviewers, and coordinate tables of content, cover images, appeals, and so much more. Their longevity is surpassed only by their dedication, expertise, can-do attitudes, organizational skills, and commitment to *AJOG*, its editors and its readers and reviewers.

Andrea Boccelli has worked with Elsevier as *AJOG's* publisher for the past 10 years. She enthusiastically supported and facilitated our new ideas and initiatives, which included revamping the print Journal, expanding our abstracts, adding new features (such as Call to Action and Sketches), expanding our social media presence, initiating an appeals process for declined manuscripts, providing awards for the most highly cited papers presented at SGS and SMFM meetings, video supplements, and much more. It is gratifying to have worked with a publisher with this kind of hands-on team approach.

And, although I did not work as closely with our Associate Editors for Obstetrics, I have uniformly appreciated their intellect, wisdom, experience, and dedication to the Journal. I am richer for having known them all. In particular, I'd like to highlight Drs Anthony Sciscione and Christopher Robinson, our inaugural and current Media Editors, and the Social Media Committee, who have worked diligently to enable wider dissemination of our authors' hard work beyond that of our print and web Journal and more directly into the hands of clinicians who can use the information to improve care for their patients.

We are witnessing a sharp increase in high-quality research around the world in many areas of gynecology, and *AJOG* has been a fortunate recipient of manuscripts related to these efforts. Each year, at least one important and often controversial issue emerges, demonstrated by a proliferation of manuscripts in that area. The hottest topics in gynecology during my tenure have been vaginal mesh,³ morcellation of fibroid tumors,⁴ the microbiome of the reproductive tract,⁵ prophylactic salpingectomy,⁶ long-acting reversible contraception,⁷ cesarean scar pregnancies,⁸ maternal and neonatal outcomes after assisted reproductive technologies,⁹ and, of course, persistent clinical conundrums such as recurrent vulvovaginal candidiasis.¹⁰ For such issues, the initial papers largely provide the foundation of knowledge and raise perceptive and provocative questions; subsequent papers continue along a stepping stone to "the truth," and ultimately well-designed larger scale studies result in manuscripts that have the potential to change clinical care. Although the latter

is the most exciting for a clinician, all steps in this journey towards the truth are crucial, and I am extremely grateful to the many authors of papers along this continuum who entrusted *AJOG* to disseminate their work.

In 2017, the latest year for which complete data are available at the time of this writing, *AJOG* received 2710 original manuscripts from 72 countries and 4587 completed peer reviews of those manuscripts that were sent for review from reviewers from 55 countries. The increased number and quality of our submissions reflects the intellectual curiosity of our authors and their drive and dedication to improving the healthcare of women through research. I am indebted to them and to our many reviewers whose insightful comments and questions have improved the quality of countless manuscripts. I am particularly grateful to the millions of women around the world who are participating in research; without them, the knowledge derived from bench research would languish with no tangible benefits to women's health. I am grateful to our readers for making the time, energy, and effort of these research participants, researchers, and reviewers worthwhile by applying the results to daily medical practice. And finally, I am, once again, grateful to *AJOG* for appointing me as the Editor-in-Chief for Gynecology—it has indeed been an adventure and an honor. ■

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