

PLENARY SESSION

STATE-OF-THE-ART LECTURE

Lecture Will Focus on First Pig-to-Human Kidney Transplant



Jayme E. Locke, MD, MPH

A leading transplant surgeon will present a state-of-the-art lecture on “Making the Impossible Possible: First-in-Human Clinical Grade Kidney Xenotransplant” on Friday, November 4.

The speaker will be Jayme E. Locke, MD, MPH, who is professor of surgery and the Arnold G. Diethelm, MD, Endowed Chair in Transplantation Surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She is also director of the Comprehensive Transplant Institute and chief of the Division of Abdominal Transplant Surgery.

In September 2021, Dr. Locke’s team performed a first-of-its-kind transplant, placing two genetically modified pig kidneys into a brain-dead human after removing the recipient’s native kidneys. The transplanted kidneys filtered blood and produced urine. The kidneys were not rejected and remained viable for the 74-hour length of the experiment with no transmission of porcine retroviruses detected. The researchers first published their study on January 20, 2022, which appeared in the April edition of the *American Journal of Transplantation*.

Dr. Locke specializes in innovative strategies for the transplantation of incompatible organs, disparities in access to and outcomes after organ transplantation, and transplantation in HIV-infected end-stage patients. She is the surgical director of the South’s leading incompatible kidney transplant program and coordinator of the UAB kidney chain, which is the longest living kidney-transplant chain in the United States, with 126 donors and recipients. Only the University of California, San Francisco, has performed more kidney transplants than UAB since statistics began being kept in 1988. UAB has performed 9055 kidney transplants, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, including almost 3435 living donor transplants.

Dr. Locke’s research interests include complex statistical analyses and modeling of transplant outcomes and behavioral research focused on health disparities. She has authored more than 140 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 20 book chapters. She is a deputy editor of the *American Journal of Transplantation* and is an editorial board member of the *Annals of Surgery*.

She has received many honors, including a distinguished investigator award from the Association for Clinical and Translational Science and a clinical investigator award from the American Society of Transplantation.

Dr. Locke received her medical degree from the East Carolina University Brody School of Medicine before training in general surgery and multi-visceral abdominal transplantation at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. She also received a Master of Public Health degree with an emphasis in biostatistics and epidemiology from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Three Patient Advocates Will Receive President’s Medals



Glenda V. Roberts



Patrick O. Gee, Sr., PhD



David Rush

Three individuals living with kidney disease embodying diverse experiences will receive the ASN President’s Medal during Kidney Week’s Opening Plenary on Friday, November 4. The three recipients will be Glenda V. Roberts; Patrick O. Gee, Sr., PhD; and David Rush.

ASN presents the medal to individuals who have helped advance the society’s mission to lead the fight against kidney diseases by educating health professionals, sharing new knowledge, advancing research, and advocating the highest quality care for patients.

Ms. Roberts is an individual living with long-term kidney disease who is director of external relations and patient engagement at the Center for Dialysis Innovation and the Kidney Research Institute at the University of Washington, Seattle. Before joining the university, Ms. Roberts spent 35 years as an information technology executive.

Based on her personal experience with kidney disease, Ms. Roberts is a passionate activist for kidney research and patients living with kidney disease. She managed the progression of her disease with diet and exercise for more than 40 years before undergoing dialysis. Since receiving a kidney transplant in 2010, she has completed nine half-marathons.

Ms. Roberts serves on myriad patient and community advisory committees, brings the patient voice to a number of National Institutes of Health and industry research efforts, and was one of two patients who were part of the National Kidney Foundation-ASN Task Force on Reassessing the Inclusion of Race in Diagnosing Kidney Diseases.

Dr. Gee is the founder and chief executive hope dealer at iAdvocate, a nonprofit, faith-based health and wellness organization. He is also an ordained minister at Mountain Movers Ministry in Richmond, VA. He retired from his position as chief of security at the Virginia Department of Corrections in 2008.

Dr. Gee’s kidney failure from diabetic kidney disease was treated with peritoneal hemodialysis until he received a transplant in 2017, which took more than 2 years to function normally. He uses his personal experiences to teach, coach, mentor, and educate others on how best to manage their outcomes.

To this end, he serves as a patient representative for the Diabetic Kidney Disease Collaborative Task Force; as vice chair of the Patient and Family Partnership Council of the Kidney Health Initiative; on advisory boards of Home Dialyzers United, the Center for Dialysis Innovation, and Patient & Family Centered Care Partners; and on U.S. Food and Drug Administration and National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases committees on diversity, inclusion, and outreach.

He is also presenting the Celeste Castillo Lee Memorial Lectureship on “Incorporating Mental Health Practices by Increasing Psychosocial Education for Kidney Recipients” on Friday, November 4.

Mr. Rush is a platinum-selling recording artist. His battle with kidney disease began in high school, and he has been an in-center dialysis patient, home dialysis patient, and transplant recipient for 7 years until his body rejected the transplant. In 2009, he took his home hemodialysis machine on a 40-city world tour in which he was the opening act for multi-platinum rapper Pitbull.

Currently a home dialysis patient, he is a motivational speaker, patient/doctor consultant, and kidney care advocate at WinsOnly Lifestyle, LLC.

Mr. Rush has served for the past 5 years on the executive committee of the Northwestern University George M. O’Brien Kidney Research Core Center (NU GoKidney). He consults for major companies, such as AstraZeneca and Outset Medical, while still making waves in the world of entertainment as a writer and producer.