

MEDALLION OF MERIT
Presented to
Louis C. Argenta, M.D.
February 19, 2015

Today, we celebrate an individual committed to honoring our tradition of *Pro Humanitate* while being radically innovative in his career, life and collaborative work. I am pleased to recognize Dr. Louis C. Argenta, professor of surgery in the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, as a 2015 Medallion of Merit recipient.

Throughout his lifetime, and especially during his time at Wake Forest, Dr. Argenta has worked tirelessly to better the lives of others around the world. After he served in the United States Navy during Vietnam, Dr. Argenta spent several years becoming a talented surgeon. He was awarded a highly coveted craniofacial surgery fellowship in Paris and became the 17th person in the world to be certified by the International Society of Craniofacial Surgery. In 1988, he accepted an invitation from Wake Forest to establish a freestanding Department of Plastic Surgery.

He quickly hired the gifted Dr. Michael Morykwas, and together, they expanded the research laboratory of the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery to become one of the pre-eminent labs in the field of plastic surgery, where multidisciplinary, transitional innovation is encouraged, supported and nurtured.

After they built the lab, the two scientists developed the Vacuum Assisted Closure wound healing technology which was commercialized by Kinetic Concepts, Inc. This technology, hailed as one of the most important advancements in wound healing in the past 25 years, has been used to treat more than 10 million patients worldwide, including nearly all extremity injuries suffered by U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. The royalties from their technology has routinely placed Wake Forest among the top royalty generating universities in the country.

Dr. Argenta is internationally recognized as an expert in the science of mechanobiology and its applications to clinical medicine. His surgical techniques are used throughout the world for complicated reconstruction surgeries; more post-mastectomy breast reconstruction is performed with the technique he developed than any other procedure.

He also became the first to recognize the epidemic development of infant skull deformities. Sick children that remained in one position while sleeping on their back developed flat skulls because of the force placed on the malleable neonatal skull. Dr. Argenta helped demonstrate that the deformity could be corrected with helmet therapy rather than surgery.

Dr. Argenta has served his profession in other ways, including being active with professional societies and publishing numerous works. He and his family have spent the last 20 years traveling extensively through the world, providing medical care to the disadvantaged.

In gratitude for his decades of leadership, ingenuity and enthusiasm as an innovative pioneer, his vision that built our distinguished Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery lab, his dedication to the greater medical community and his lifelong commitment to the spirit of *Pro Humanitate*, Wake Forest University confers its highest honor, the Medallion of Merit, on Dr. Louis C. Argenta on this Nineteenth day of February, Two Thousand Fifteen.

Nathan O. Hatch, President
Wake Forest University