



National Marfan Foundation • 1981–2011

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Keith Bridwell, MD, and Lawrence Lenke, MD, Washington University School of Medicine, to be Honored at *Heartworks St. Louis* Gala, February 26

Event to Benefit the National Marfan Foundation

PORT WASHINGTON, NY, February 1, 2011 – Keith Bridwell, MD, Chief of Spine Surgery in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Asa C. and Dorothy W. Jones Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, and Lawrence Lenke, MD, Jerome J. Gilden Endowed Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, Washington University School of Medicine, are the 2011 recipients of the National Marfan Foundation's Hero with a Heart Awards. The presentation will be made at *Heartworks St. Louis* on February 26.

The National Marfan Foundation (NMF), which provides education, support and research on Marfan syndrome, a potentially fatal connective tissue disorder, is honoring Dr. Bridwell and Dr. Lenke for their expertise and innovation in treating complex spine disorders and deformities, which are so common in the Marfan community.

The cardiovascular complications of Marfan syndrome and related disorders are considered the most life-threatening aspect of the condition. However, it is often the skeletal problems associated with Marfan syndrome that have the greatest impact on quality of life on a daily basis. Spinal deformities are among the many skeletal features of Marfan syndrome that cause pain and limit mobility in affected individuals.

Approximately 200,000 people in the U.S. have Marfan syndrome or a related connective tissue disorder. Experts say that about half of those affected do not know they have the potentially life-threatening condition and, without a diagnosis and treatment, are at risk of a sudden early death.

Heartworks St. Louis is now in its third year. More than 200 people attended last year's event, including leading St. Louis area clinicians and researchers on Marfan syndrome and members of the St. Louis Chapter of the National Marfan Foundation.

Heartworks St. Louis will be held at the Starlight Ballroom at the Chase Park Plaza. A cocktail reception will commence at 7 pm, with dinner and the awards ceremony at 8 pm. Entertainment will be provided by jazz vocalist Erin Bode.

Alan Braverman, MD, Alumni Endowed Professor in Cardiovascular Diseases, Washington University School of Medicine, and his wife, Rebecca, are hosts of the evening. Dr. Braverman, who is the Director of the Marfan Syndrome Clinic at Washington University School of Medicine and Barnes Jewish Hospital, lost his father to Marfan syndrome and has a brother and nephew who are affected with the condition. He currently serves as Chair of the NMF's Professional Advisory Board.

“It is because of the research and clinical care at experienced centers such as those found in the St. Louis community that people with Marfan syndrome and related disorders can have the hope for a normal lifespan,” said Carolyn Levering, NMF President and CEO. “Drs. Bridwell and Lenke are true pioneers in the treatment of many of the skeletal problems associated with Marfan syndrome. We are proud to honor them at this year’s *Heartworks St. Louis* for their impact on the day-to-day lives of those in this patient community.”

2011 Hero with a Heart Honorees

Dr. Bridwell is the founder and Director of the Washington University Spine Fellowship program, which was initiated in 1991 and to-date has trained 47 fellows, with 4 currently in training. In addition to his positions at Washington University, he holds hospital appointments at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis Children’s Hospital, and St. Louis Shriners Hospital for Children.

Dr. Bridwell is an active member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the North American Spine Society, the American Orthopaedic Association, and the Scoliosis Research Society, which he served as president from 2002-2003. An active researcher in the spine field since 1982, Dr. Bridwell has contributed more than 50 chapters to medical textbooks, more than 260 articles to scientific peer-reviewed journals, and more than 440 scientific abstracts/ presentations. He is a deputy editor for *Spine*, co-editor-in-chief of *The Textbook of Spinal Surgery*, editions 1 and 2 (with the third edition currently in press).

Dr. Lenke, who treats patients at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis Children’s Hospital and Shriners Hospital for Children, is devoted exclusively to spinal surgery with an emphasis on complex reconstructive surgery and the treatment of various spinal deformities such as scoliosis, kyphosis and spondylolisthesis. He is a member of several specialty study groups on spinal deformity, as well as the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America, North American Spine Society, and Scoliosis Research Society, which he currently serves as president.

Dr. Lenke has presided as chair of IMAST (International Meeting on Advanced Spine Techniques), as well as chair to more than 70 other professional spinal surgery meetings worldwide. He has authored/co-authored 590 scientific abstracts/presentations, and has served as invited lecturer to more than 260 national/international scientific meetings and more than 70 Grand Rounds/Visiting Lectureships. As an author, Dr. Lenke has contributed more than 80 chapters to medical textbooks, more than 265 articles to scientific peer-reviewed journals, and more than 70 non-peer-reviewed/invited articles. He has also served as editor for many textbooks and scientific journals, including the textbook *Spinal Deformity: A Guide to Surgical Planning and Management*. He is also the Spine Consultant for professional sports teams in the St. Louis area, including the Rams and the Blues.

Tickets to Heartworks St. Louis are \$200 each. To purchase, contact Kristin Braun at 516-883-8712, ext. 24, or kbraun@marfan.org.

Washington University School of Medicine and Barnes-Jewish Hospital: Leader in Marfan Syndrome Care and Research

Marfan syndrome is a connective tissue disorder that affects the heart, blood vessels, eyes, bones, joints and lungs. It is often, but not always, characterized by a tall stature and disproportionately long legs and arms. Other skeletal manifestations are curvature of the spine, a protruding or indented chest and loose joints. The most serious problem associated with Marfan syndrome is its effect on the aorta, the main artery carrying blood away from the heart.

The aorta is prone to progressive enlargement, which can lead to tears in the aortic wall that require surgery. If aortic enlargement and tears are left undetected, the aorta may rupture, leading to sudden death.

The life expectancy for people with Marfan syndrome who are diagnosed and treated is now in the 70's due to advances in cardiovascular surgery, improvements in medical therapy and enhanced awareness and diagnosis. Without a proper diagnosis and medical management, patients with Marfan syndrome are at risk for aortic dissection and sudden death.

The Marfan Syndrome Clinics at Washington University School of Medicine and Barnes-Jewish Hospital and at St. Louis Children's Hospital are among the leading Marfan syndrome clinics in the country, providing comprehensive and coordinated care for patients in all disciplines related to Marfan syndrome, most notable cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, vascular surgery, orthopedics, ophthalmology, medical genetics, and high-risk obstetrics.

Washington University School of Medicine is among 28 institutions in the U.S., Canada and abroad that are participating in a federally-funded clinical trial on a potentially new treatment for the aorta in people with Marfan syndrome. The researchers are comparing losartan, an already FDA-approved medication, and atenolol, a beta blocker that is the current gold standard treatment for Marfan syndrome.

The National Marfan Foundation

The National Marfan Foundation is a non-profit voluntary health organization dedicated to saving lives and improving the quality of life of individuals and families affected by the Marfan syndrome and related disorders by:

- Educating affected individuals, family members and the health care community about the Marfan syndrome.
- Advocating for and funding clinical and molecular research into the early detection and treatment of Marfan syndrome.
- Providing a network of local and special-interest support groups to help affected people and their families share experiences.

For more information on Marfan syndrome, contact the NMF at 800-8-MARFAN or visit the NMF's web site at www.marfan.org.

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