

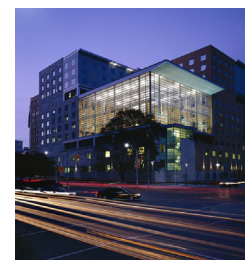
Doctors of Thoracic Surgery: The Division of Thoracic Surgery at Toronto General Hospital

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The Division of Thoracic Surgery at Toronto General Hospital has a history of sustained excellence and commitment to patient care, research and innovation in Thoracic Surgery. Doctors of Thoracic Surgery (DOTSR) continues to be a leading thoracic division training surgeons who practice all over the world - impacting the treatment of patients with thoracic disease. Many leaders in our specialty worldwide have directly or indirectly trained in Toronto. At University Health Network and the University of Toronto, this academic division has continued to contribute and thrive in a highly supportive and productive research and clinical environment.

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Toronto General Hospital

Central Message

Toronto General Hospital - a school of Thoracic Surgery with a legacy and sustained commitment to training thoracic surgeons, excellence in clinical care and scientific innovation.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIVISION AND A SCHOOL OF THORACIC SURGERY AT TORONTO GENERAL HOSPITAL

As a young surgeon working on Dr Norman Delarue's service at the Toronto General Hospital (TGH) in the 1960s, Dr F. Griffith Pearson developed a keen interest in surgery of the thorax. It remained a time when the treatment of lung, esophageal, and airway conditions was in the domain of "general surgery." In some institutions cardiac surgery foci of activity were starting to develop, but there was essentially no dedicated focus on thoracic surgery per se. With his natural curiosity, exceptional medical and surgical talent and focused interest in the area of thoracic surgery, Dr Pearson was the force behind the sustained development of thoracic surgery as a separate division first at TGH in 1967, and next as a separate speciality in Canada at the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada, and arguably world-wide thereafter (Fig. 1).

With the development of the thoracic surgery unit at TGH, Dr Pearson's presence and activity caught the attention of surgeons from the world and it was the inception of the "Toronto School of Thoracic Surgery." This led to the establishment of a certification in Thoracic Surgery as a separate

speciality in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in 1978. With the establishment of focused training in thoracic surgery, and the subsequent attraction of a series bright, talented disciple surgeons, numerous surgeons at the University of Toronto and others, who traveled to Toronto, sought to train with Pearson and his team. A staggering number of these went on to subsequently establish themselves as leaders in Thoracic Surgery around the world. This would have included individuals such as Joel Cooper, Bob Ginsberg, Alec Patterson, David Sugarbaker, Thomas Rice, Larry Kaiser, Shaf Keshavjee, Tom Waddell, and many more leaders.

TRAINING THORACIC SURGEONS OF THE FUTURE AND TACKLING DIFFICULT PROBLEMS

If there was, and remains, a singular defining feature of the Division of Thoracic Surgery (DOTS) at TGH initiated by Dr Griff Pearson and perpetuated to this day, it would be spirit of tackling difficult problems. The inherent belief that what is not possible today can be made possible with careful research and application of the findings to translation into innovative and transformative care at the bedside. This would apply in many areas and particularly in airway surgery, lung cancer, esophageal disease, and lung transplantation (Video available here: #45 First Successful Lung Transplant in the World, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIVtrdKLPWg&feature=c4-overview&list=UUB-segCeC3f2DcEY6HtaavQ>). When one problem is solved the next challenge on the horizon becomes the target of persistent, diligent research until that too is solved. *What's next?*

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Figure 1. Dr F Griffith Pearson, Founder of the Thoracic Surgery in Toronto.

With this productivity and expanding breath of interest in diseases of the thorax the DOTS at TGH continued to grow and became a powerhouse in the field in the 1980s with the coming together of Griff Pearson, Joel Cooper, Bob Ginsberg, Tom Todd, Alec Patterson, and Mel Goldberg. Although the division had some transition of members, many of the graduates from the Toronto training program went onto significant leadership positions such as David Sugarbaker (Brigham and Women's Hospital Harvard), Larry Kaiser (University of Pennsylvania, Temple University), Bob Ginsberg (Memorial Sloan-Kettering and TGH), Paul Waters (University of California, Los Angeles), Joel Cooper (St. Louis Barnes Hospital), Alec Patterson (St. Louis Barnes Hospital), Mel Goldberg (Fox Chase Cancer Center Philadelphia), Dennis Wiggle (Mayo Clinic, Rochester MN), and so on. This also created a legacy of American Association for Thoracic Surgery Presidents—Pearson, Cooper, Patterson, and Sugarbaker.

The division has continued with its dedicated focus on education and currently trains 2 certified Royal College residents each year and in excess of 7 thoracic surgery fellows encompassing thoracic oncology, minimally invasive surgery, interventional pulmonology, and lung transplantation.

DOCTORS OF THORACIC SURGERY—THE CONCEPT OF DOTS

With the continued success and expansion of the DOTS in Toronto, Dr Keshavjee led the group through a strategic exploration and brand development process which helped to articulate the “core DNA” of the DOTS in Toronto. This was an in depth exploration and discovery process. With the guidance of David Kincaid from Level5, a company that specializes in brand development, and the Scientific Intelligence process the group was able to articulate the essence of Thoracic Surgery in Toronto. David and his group quickly recognized what this division represents on the local, national and international stage and helped to identify key underlying characteristics. They sort to identify the “core DNA” of the DOTS to their surprise, they divulged “What's Next?” as the defining core DNA of the DOTS at TGH. It alludes to the fact that as a group, we continue to strive to push the boundaries and look for solutions to problems that have not yet been solved—and in fact, we have a number of examples of otherwise insurmountable appearing problems being brought to routine standard of care—both in our institution and worldwide. The development of clinical lung transplantation is a shining example of this and there are many others.

We also recognized and acknowledged that a fundamental defining feature lies in the fact that we do not just perform surgery. Thus the acronym “DOTS^R” was adopted to reflect not just “Division of Thoracic Surgery,” but also “Doctors of Thoracic Surgery” making it clear as to who we are and what we aspire to be. The DOTS logo is to be interpreted as stylized “lungs” (Fig. 2), and is also designed to reflect “infinite possibilities” and also “connecting the DOTS”—referring again to the concept of finding answers to challenging problems that we face. Branding the group as such has had a tremendous positive and defining impact not only on the surgeons that lead this group, but the entire division and members of our extended healthcare team across the hospital and research program.

FOCUS ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

TGH, part of University Health Network is truly a research hospital. This in-grained philosophical approach to research and innovation has provided a fertile and enabling environment that has been a critical component of the success of DOTS (Video available here: The Future is Now@UHN, <https://vimeo.com/67160458>) The thoracic surgery research laboratory has been an important part of the core DNA of this division over many decades. It was clear that many of the most challenging problems could not be solved in patients and need to be tackled with fundamental research in the laboratory

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