

Thank you Brad for those kind words.

It is a true honor to receive an award given in honor of Noel Cohen. Noel was one of my heroes in our field.

Noel was a master clinician, a great champion for cochlear implants, and a superb academic leader for his NYU program. He exuded both wisdom and humility and was eminently personable – a delight to be with. Noel was a role model for me and many others.

I have always been immensely grateful that I choose neurotology as a field. It presents a wide assortment of interesting clinical challenges, entails precise and demanding surgery, and is intellectually fascinating.

Reflecting, my first ANS meeting was when I was an R2 at UCSF in 1981 - 40 years ago ANS in its present form, was only 7 years old - having been constituted in 1974 after starting as a ENG study group in the mid-1960s.

Neurotology as a specialty is young. In a way, we kind of grew up together.

To give an illustration, as a resident we still used plain films of the mastoid and polytomes for fine details—CT and MRI were just emerging and nothing like the quality of today's imagery.

When I was a fellow operative neurotology already had its classical approaches to the IAC and CPA, but skull base surgery was new and has evolved a great deal over my career.

From my perspective the future of neurotology has never been brighter. My generation stood on the shoulders of those who had invented effective ways of overcoming conductive hearing loss.

Many attending this session will witness a future during which sensory hearing loss will have become as treatable as conductive losses.

I envision a much more device centric future for our field. The traditional stigma associated with hearing aids is fast fading – what you wear on your ear is becoming a badge of technological prowess rather than a mark of infirmity.

Hearing aids are rapidly transitioning into multifunctional devices in a connected ecosystem of wearable digital technology. They will be a portal for information flow, translate languages, measure activity, identify risk for falling, and continuously monitor a wide array of biometric data in a location much more closely reflective of brain function than the wrist, for example.

When wearing an earpiece becomes a ubiquitous consumer electronic device, we simply program into it accommodation for hearing loss for those who need it. It will be a game changer.

As otologists-neurotologists - we own the interface for such systems and there are great opportunities for invention.

As a trainee, I benefited greatly from superb mentors, especially at the House Ear Institute in the days when Bill and Howard House were still active and Derald Brackmann was a fairly young buck - but already an exceptional surgical role model.

Following in the footsteps of my mentors, after 4 years on the UCSF faculty I started a neurotology fellowship in 1989 -32 years ago.

The highest honor a teacher can have is to be surpassed by his trainees – and there are many examples among them. Some are my Stanford colleagues.

I am immensely proud of our fellows – they are among the thought leaders in our field.

I have learned a lot from them.

Thank you

*Remarks from Dr. Robert Jackler after receiving the Award on April 10, 2021*