



## Community Symposium

*For medical experts, survivors, and affected families*

The John Ritter Foundation is dedicated to improving the identification of individuals at risk for aortic dissections and the treatment of thoracic aortic disease through medical research. The foundation also seeks to provide accurate information to the general public about the disease and its risk factors, along with support to individuals who have thoracic aortic disease or have lost a loved one to the disease. Finally, the foundation is dedicated to raising awareness of thoracic aortic disease, including risk factors, proper medical and surgical management, and recognition of symptoms of an acute aortic dissection.

ROCK FROM THE HEART  
FOR AORTIC HEALTH



WWW.ROCKFROMTHEHEART.ORG

## Friday February 8th 2019

Community Symposium 2—6 pm

Reception 6—7 pm

Recognition Dinner 7pm

Loews Hotel

Stone Arch Ballroom Minneapolis

Symposium Admission FREE

Dinner \$35 (\$20 for survivors)

## COMMUNITY SYMPOSIUM AND RECOGNITION DINNER SCHEDULE

### Patty Peterson—emcee

1:30-2:00 <sup>pm</sup>	Registration and Check-in		
2:00-2:15 <sup>pm</sup>	Welcome and Introductions	Amy Yasbeck	The John Ritter Foundation
2:15-2:45 <sup>pm</sup>	Aortic Disease Genetics	Dianna Milewicz, MD PhD	John Ritter Research Program
2:45-4:00 <sup>pm</sup>	Thoracic Aortic aneurysm <i>And acute aortic dissection</i> Aortic Disease <i>And associated thoracic aortic disease</i> Aortic Valve Surgery	Kevin Harris, MD Alex Campbell, MD Judah Askew, MD	Minneapolis Heart Institute Minneapolis Heart Institute Minneapolis Heart Institute
4:00-4:30 <sup>pm</sup>	Dental Health and the Heart	Kelli Schaust	Crow River Dental
4:30-5:30 <sup>pm</sup>	Survivor Stories		
5:30-6:00 <sup>pm</sup>	Question and Answer Panel	Marilyn Serafini-Moderator	Heart Valve Voice
6:00-6:45 <sup>pm</sup>	Cocktail Reception		
6:45 <sup>pm</sup>	Recognition Dinner	Introduction by survivor Carin Andersen	

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AT  
*Ridgeway*  
HEART CENTER



**Amy Yasbeck** *Founder, the John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health*

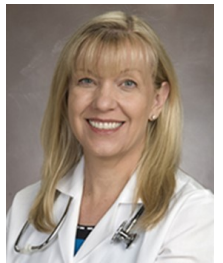
Amy Yasbeck has appeared extensively on both the big and small screens. Her feature film work includes *The Mask*, *Robin Hood Men in Tights* and *Problem Child*. Her television work includes numerous guest star and series work: most notably her role as Casey in NBC's long-running hit comedy *Wings*. Ms. Yasbeck was married to legendary comic actor John Ritter who succumbed to a misdiagnosed acute aortic dissection in 2003. Since that time, she has devoted herself to promoting awareness of this devastating disease. In an effort to provide the medical, scientific and lay communities with an opportunity to explore their common goals she created the John

Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health. [www.johnritterfoundation.org](http://www.johnritterfoundation.org)

In 2010, Ms. Yasbeck joined with Genetic researcher Dr. Dianna M. Milewicz, M.D., Ph.D., to prevent premature deaths due to thoracic aortic disease by improving diagnosis, treatment, and public awareness. Together, they established the John Ritter Research Program in Aortic and Vascular Diseases at UTHealth in Houston.

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**Dianna M. Milewicz, M.D. Ph.D.**, is the President George H.W. Bush Chair of Cardiovascular Medicine, Director of the Division of Medical Genetics and Vice-Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). She completed her postgraduate training in internal medicine, specialized further in cardiology and medical genetics, and forged a career in translational studies focused on genetic predisposition to aortic dissection and other vascular diseases. She has received numerous honors and awards for her research, including the Antoine Marfan Award, the Doris Duke Distinguished Clinical Scientist Award, the Belgium Princess Lilian Award, an American Heart Association Merit Award, and the University of Texas Presidential Scholars Award for Excellence in Research. She has sought to rapidly and efficiently translate her research findings into improved clinical care and she recently launched the international Montalcino Aortic Consortium to improve the care of aortic disease patients worldwide. Her patient advocacy is evident by her appointment as chair or member of numerous Boards, including that of the Marfan Foundation, John Ritter Foundation, Genetic Aortic Disease Association of Canada, Thoracic Aortic Disease Coalition and American Heart Association.



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**Kevin M. Harris, MD** *Cardiologist Minneapolis Heart Institute*



Dr. Harris is a clinical cardiologist and echocardiographer at the Minneapolis Heart Institute with clinical and research interests in aortic disease and aortic dissection, valvular heart disease, and heart disease in athletes. He is actively involved in cardiology education, serving as director of cardiology training for the HCMC/Minneapolis Heart Institute® at Abbott Northwestern Hospital training program since 2011. He is the currently medical director of the Aortic Dissection Program and is a member of the International Registry of Acute Aortic Dissection (IRAD) group. He has authored over 90 manuscripts and book chapters, many on aortic diseases including co-authoring the AHA statement on Eligibility of Athletes with Aortic disease. Dr. Harris enjoys the complete spectrum of cardiovascular care from prevention of disease to acute illness. He values the privilege to build relationships with patients and families on a continuing basis.

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**Alex R. Campbell, MD** *Cardiologist Minneapolis Heart Institute*

As a general cardiologist, I specialize in evaluating, diagnosing, and treating a broad spectrum of cardiovascular disorders. I strive to provide compassionate, patient-centered, evidence based, and cost effective care. While I enjoy all aspects of cardiovascular disease, my specific clinical interests include valvular heart disease, critical care, telemedicine, heart failure, prevention, and medical education. My research interests include healthcare quality improvement and I have published and presented on a national level. I am passionate about cardiovascular disease and have been honored as a Minneapolis St. Paul Magazine Rising Star in Medicine, and a National "Top 5% in Patient Communication" physician in 2015, 2016, and 2017.



### **Judah Askew MD** *Cardiothoracic Surgeon – Minneapolis Heart Institute*

Dr. Askew specializes in thoracic surgery, including valve surgery, heart transplants and ventricular assist devices.

#### **Educational institutions**

Harvard Medical School  
Tufts University School of Medicine  
Oregon Health Sciences University

#### **Memberships**

Society of Thoracic Surgeons



### **Kelli Schaust** *Dental Hygienist -Crow River Dental*

Kelli Schaust is a licensed dental hygienist working full-time at a general dental office in Delano, MN. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Minnesota - Morris, she completed an associate's in dental hygiene at Normandale Community College. While there, Kelli held numerous leadership positions within the dental hygiene program and graduated with high honors. She simultaneously attended Metropolitan State University to complete her bachelor's in dental hygiene.

### **Patty Peterson** *Aortic Dissection Survivor*

Patty Peterson was born into Minnesota's First Family of Music; The Peterson Family. She began singing as a child at concerts and recording sessions, and today is an award-winning vocalist, live jazz radio host, and inspirational speaker. As a vocalist, Patty has performed to sold-out audiences all over the country such as The Dakota Club in Minneapolis, Vibrato in Beverly Hills, and Catalina's Jazz Club in LA and Patty has released 4 solo recordings and also hosts a weekly contemporary jazz show on Jazz 88.5 fm in Minneapolis.

Patty is a 12-year survivor of Aortic Dissection and valve replacement. As a result, she has been a featured speaker for The American Heart Association, Go Red for Women, University of Texas Aortic Symposium, Rotary Clubs, St. Jude Medical and The Minneapolis Heart Institute. Patty has received the American Heart & Stroke Association "Hero" Award for her volunteer efforts to raise awareness on Aortic Dissection and Heart/Valve disease.



### **Marilyn Serafini** *Heart Valve Voice*

Marilyn Serafini brings more than 25 years of public policy experience to Heart Valve Voice US. Following her mom's successful aortic valve replacement, Marilyn became an advocate for heart valve patients in April of 2018. She is also an advisor to the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, DC, and an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University. Before joining Heart Valve Voice-US, Ms. Serafini was president & co-CEO of the Alliance for Health Policy, a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping policymakers understand the foundations of health policy, the roots of the nation's health care issues, and the trade-offs posed by various proposals for change. From 1995 to 2010, Ms. Serafini was the health care and welfare correspondent for *National Journal* magazine, and before that was a senior reporter for CongressDaily (now National Journal daily). She has a master's degree in journalism and public affairs from American University and a bachelor's degree from UMBC.



# Survivors

## Jeff Harter

I am a very lucky Husband to a great wife Jennie Harter. (married 26 years) Father of 3 wonderful Daughters. I was diagnosed with a Bi-cuspid valve at the age of 12. Having a Cardiologist for nearly 35 years they monitored my valve yearly. They never looked at my Aorta 1 time. (50% of all bicuspid valves result in an aneurysm) Insurance changed and I was forced to go to a new office for my echo. That was when they found it, March of 2016, 5.8 cm. I had surgery at Cleveland Clinic June 2nd 2016 with Dr Svensson. I had a Aneurysm repair with a tissue valve replacement. (cow) I started seeing DR Kalahasti cardiologist from the CC prior to my surgery and I continue til this day. After surgery and after going through a very hard time with depression (about 1 year) I focused my energy on starting a FB group exclusively for Thoracic Aneurysms. Includes effected and close family only. It has been both fulfilling and rewarding to help and give back. I also started a program where every member after surgery gets a t-shirt free of charge. I have been invited to speak at the 1st annual Rock from the heart symposium and concert supporting the John Ritter Foundation and hope to continue to reach out to those diagnosed with this condition.



## Carin Andersen Aortic Dissection Survivor

Carin Andersen is a survivor of a Type A Aortic Dissection and also lives with Crohn's disease. Carin's prior career in Human Resources and Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Towson University, lends itself to her new role as a Co-Founder of the globally recognized non-profit, Aortic Hope. Aortic Hope is a post-diagnosis patient advocacy group. They specialize in Spreading Hope, Creating Awareness, and Providing Support for patients, survivors and caregivers during the recovery and management of aortic disease. In addition to her various initiatives with Aortic Hope, she is devoted to her family and makes time to enjoy musical theater and painting.

## Tony Galarce

Tony is married to Dawn and has 2 children and 3 grandchildren. He was diagnosed with a 5.4cm aortic aneurysm in 2017, discovered at a routine physical after his doctor heard a heart murmur. Surgery was scheduled for July 10, 2017. At that time, I was probably not prepared to ask all the questions that I needed to ask. I spent a lot of time on Google and YouTube and was somewhat obsessed with researching my surgery and valve selection. I had a bio prosthetic porcine valve, an aortic root Dacron graft, and a Hemiarch Dacron graft. On July 20 I went in for my post-surgery follow-up and everything seemed to be going well. I started cardiac rehab on July 27 and did 3 weeks of it. It really helped me to prepare for my return to work. I had a follow-up echo cardiogram at 6 months and a follow-up CT scan at the one year point. My surgeon said that everything looked great. I was released to the care of my cardiologist for continued follow-up. I feel blessed that the whole experience went as smoothly as it did. I like to tell my story to support others so that they can know that experiencing an aneurysm and surgery can go smoothly with little to no complications.

## Carolyn Atwell

Carolyn was diagnosed at age 25 with Turner's Syndrome, a chromosome abnormality affecting females that is associated with short stature, heart defects, and other concerns. She was quickly referred for complete cardiac evaluation after the Turner's diagnosis. The scans performed showed an Aortic Bicuspid Valve and an Ascending Aortic Aneurysm. Ten years later, she was encouraged to have her ascending aorta prophylactically replaced. Her surgery was June 15, 2018 at age 35. In addition to being a patient and self-advocate, Carolyn is a musician and music educator who is passionate about sharing music with her young students. She also enjoys spending time with her family including siblings, parents, nieces and nephews, reading, and volunteering at her local humane society.

## Ryan Comerford

My cardiovascular journey started at birth when a heart murmur was identified but no root cause was diagnosed. It was not until I underwent reconstructive spine surgery in 2006 that my aortic valve deficiencies were discovered. At that time, my cardiologists told me that I had a bicuspid aortic valve, and given my other measurements were in range, most conversations focused around the valve itself. I would go for annual checkups for the next decade or so, with no real Aortic challenges. However, in April of 2018, an MRI uncovered that my Aorta had reached Aneurysm levels and was now measuring at a size of 5.3 CM. My Cardiac Surgeon advised surgery, and so we scheduled my procedure for September 11 of 2018. Surgery went extraordinarily well. I received the On-X Mechanical Valve and it was discovered that my aortic valve was actually unicuspid. While I am still only a few months into my recovery, I continue to get stronger every single day. I am feeling positive I will return to form even healthier, and I look forward to running the Chicago Marathon in October 2019.

