ENDOUROLOGY SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL TRAVELING SCHOLARSHIP OBSERVERSHIP REPORT

September – October 2025

ENDOUROLOGY SOCIETY TRAVELLING SCHOLAR:

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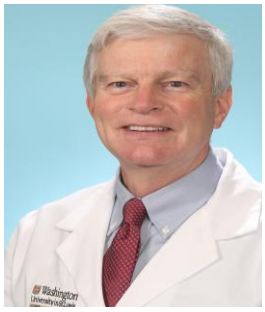

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Taylor Family & Ralph V. Clayman, Chair in Minimally Invasive Urology
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Introduction

It is with sincere gratitude that I submit this report on my one-month observership at the Urology Division of Washington University in St. Louis and Barnes-Jewish Hospital (BJH), made possible through the 2025 Endourology Society International Traveling Scholarship. This opportunity was professionally enriching, academically stimulating, and personally memorable. It provided me with valuable exposure to a high-volume, highly organized, and academically vibrant endourology program.

From the very beginning of my stay, I was received with exceptional warmth and generosity. The entire team was welcoming, supportive, and collegial, which made my observership both comfortable and productive. I was especially touched by the wonderful welcome reception organized by Dr. Sherb Figenshau. That gesture set the tone for the rest of my stay and reflected the culture of hospitality, mentorship, and professionalism within the department. Being welcomed in such a thoughtful manner made me feel respected not only as a visiting scholar, but also as a colleague and member of the wider global urology community.

Picture: *Welcome Dinner with Dr. Figenshau the Urology Faculty of Washington University in St. Louis*

During my month at WashU, I had the privilege of observing most of the endourology surgical cases performed by Dr. Figenshau and Dr. Kefu Du. These include robotic radical prostatectomies, radical and partial nephrectomies, RIRS, and HoLEP. This was one of the most valuable components of the observership. The experience allowed me to closely follow the clinical workflow from case planning to operative execution and postoperative management. I observed the technical precision of the surgeons, the efficiency of the operating room teams, and the strong emphasis placed on patient safety, communication, and multidisciplinary collaboration. Beyond the surgical techniques themselves, I gained insight into how an advanced academic center integrates decision-making, teamwork, training, and systems-based care to achieve high standards of patient outcomes.

***Picture*: Left:** *With Professor Hubert Swana (Residency Program Director and Director of Pediatric Urology);* **Right:** *With Matt (Uro-oncology fellow), Kendrick and Alejandro (urology residents)*

The observership also gave me a deeper appreciation of the educational environment within the department. The interaction between faculty, fellows, and residents was dynamic and intellectually engaging. Teaching was clearly embedded in daily clinical practice, whether in the operating room, case discussions, or formal academic sessions. This model of continuous teaching and mentorship was particularly inspiring to me, as it highlighted the importance of structured learning and academic exchange in shaping the next generation of urologists.

A particularly meaningful part of my stay was the opportunity to contribute academically by delivering two lecture sessions to the urology faculty and residents. This was a true honor. These sessions allowed me to share my own perspectives and experiences, while also engaging in thoughtful discussion with a highly accomplished academic audience. I also presented a couple of clinical cases that I encountered during my routine practice in Ethiopia. I valued this opportunity because it transformed the observership from a one-way learning experience into a genuine exchange of knowledge. It was gratifying to contribute to the academic life of the department and to represent my institution and country in a meaningful way.

These interactions reinforced the importance of global collaboration in urology and demonstrated how much can be gained when colleagues from different practice settings learn from one another.

Picture*: Giving a talk; during an academic day at the urology division of Washington University in St. louis.: 1st floor Barnes Jewish Hospital (BJH)*

My stay at Washington University had a strong impact on my professional development. I returned to Ethiopia with new ideas and renewed motivation, particularly in the areas of endourology practice, surgical education, team-based care, and academic engagement. The observership strengthened my belief that excellence in urology depends not only on surgical skill, but also on systems, mentorship, discipline, and a culture of continuous improvement. Many of the lessons I learned during this experience are directly relevant to my work in Ethiopia, especially in advancing training, improving perioperative organization, and promoting high-quality endourologic care in resource-variable settings.

This experience also reaffirmed the importance of international partnerships in strengthening urologic care globally. For surgeons working in Africa and other low-resource environments, opportunities like this are not merely observational; they are transformative. They help build bridges, inspire innovation, and promote the transfer of knowledge in ways that can benefit patients and training programs long after the visit has ended.

This traveling scholarship also created an opportunity to secure the donation of multiple urology supplies from Boston Scientific. I delivered these materials, valued at over 20,000 USD, to my hospital in Ethiopia, where they are currently being used to support patient care. This achievement was made possible through the thoughtful efforts of Drs. Sherb Figenshau and Kefu Du in supporting my institution.

***Picture**: With Dr. Kefu Du receiving donated urology materials from Boston Scientific (**left**); Submitting the materials to my hospital administration up on my return to Ethiopia (**right**)*

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Endourology Society for awarding me the 2025 International Traveling Scholarship and for investing in the professional growth of urologists from across the world. I am equally grateful to the faculty, fellows, residents, nursing staff, and operating room teams at Washington University and Barnes-Jewish Hospital for their generosity, openness, and support throughout my stay. I am especially thankful to Dr. Sherb Figenshau for the warm reception and for helping create such a welcoming environment. I was also delighted by the thoughtful gift that is crafted in the shape of the beautiful St. Louis Gate Way Arch, it was a memorable last day.

Picture*: Final day with* ***Dr. Kefu Du*** *(left) and* ***Dr. R. Sherburne Figenshau*** *(right) receiving a gift crafted in the shape of the Gateway Arch of St. Louis.*

In summary, my observership at Washington University in St. Louis and Barnes-Jewish Hospital was an outstanding and memorable experience. It enriched my clinical perspective, broadened my academic horizons, and strengthened my commitment to advancing endourology and urologic education in Ethiopia. I remain deeply thankful for this opportunity and for the relationships and lessons that came from it.

This scholarship experience was not only a period of observation, but a meaningful phase of professional growth, academic exchange, and international collaboration. I return to Ethiopia better equipped, more inspired, and deeply committed to translating these lessons into better training and better patient care.

Acknowledgments

I give a special recognition for the Fellowship Committee of Endourology society and Ms. Michele Paoli, who anticipated the challenges international visitors face and helped me a lot to make the journey easier. Additionally, I acknowledge the contribution and generosity of Boston Scientific in St. Louis for the material donation, valued at about 20, 000 USD.