

## *Epochs in Endourology*

# History of the ROCK Society

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**I**N 1977, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH moved to fund five specialized centers of research (SCOR) in urolithiasis. Drs. Broadus (Yale), Coe (Chicago), Finlayson (Florida), Pak (Texas Southwestern), and Smith (Mayo) initiated these centers. Part of the impetus for developing the ROCK Society came from this previous establishment of five SCOR programs in urinary stone disease.

One requirement of these centers was that they must have meetings to exchange ideas and information at least once per year. Because a number of other stone research centers outside the SCOR group existed, these “outsiders” felt that there also should be a forum for scientific discourse outside the SCOR urolithiasis program.

During the American Urological Association (AUA) meeting of May 1978, some AUA members who were interested in the basic mechanisms involved in human urinary stone formation and treatment proposed formation of a special interest group. Initiators included myself, Birdwell Finlayson, M.J.V. Smith, Jim Roberts, and Lynwood Smith. As things turned out, most leaders of the SCOR programs soon were absorbed into and became an integral part of the ROCK Society. Thus, Charles Pak chaired the 1979 meeting in Dallas, Tex.; Dr. Coe, the 1980 meeting in Chicago, Ill.; Dr. Finlayson the 1982 and 1983 meetings in Gainesville, Fla. and Salt Lake City, Utah, respectively; and Dr. L. Smith, the 1986 meeting in Rochester, Minn.

Genesis of the name “ROCK” Society came from deliberations by many potential members who met in a hallway outside the AUA meeting rooms. The name ROCK abbreviates The Society for Research on Calculous Kinetics, and, through time, the preferred contraction has been the ROCK Society.

Initially, meetings paralleled the National Kidney Foundation annual convention. Thus, the first meeting was held in Covington, La., in November 1978 with Dr. James Roberts as chairman, while the National Kidney Foundation met in New Orleans. Our actual meeting site was the Delta Primate Center. The members who attended that meeting generated a constitution and bylaws. Other meeting sites and chairs are shown in Table 1.

These first meeting attendees determined that the main object for the Society “shall be to further the investigation of calculi and reach a better understanding of the basic mechanisms involved as follows:

1. By informal group discussion of material that is of cross-disciplinary interest.
2. By exchange of ideas pertaining to clinical experiences and experimental research.
3. Every member is required to give a presentation at a meeting every three years, or he/she is excluded from the membership of the Society [sic].
4. By consideration of problems encountered in calculous research.
5. By the promotion of good fellowship and mutual trust among members of this organization.”

Initially, membership was limited to 21 members throughout the North American continent. Subsequently, that membership number has increased progressively to its present 30 members. Members who missed two consecutive meetings were expelled. Members over the age of 60 initially became “honorary” members “without franchise.” This latter restriction created some dissent, so the clause was later changed to indicate that members over the age of 55 became emeritus members with all rights of membership except that they did not have any attendance or presentation requirements. Dr. Bill Thomas of the University of Florida became the first honorary/emeritus member in 1979.

To avoid too great a representation from any given institution, no more than two members might be from the same site. Also, representation from different disciplines, such as clinical or basic science, was encouraged. By 1985, 5 years after the founding of the Society, its membership comprised 11 urologists, 5 nephrologists, and 5 basic scientists. Representation of greater proportions of urologists continued after these early years, primarily because the organizing group came from urology.

Perhaps one of the most important components of this early constitution and bylaws arose from the recognized

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TABLE 1 ROCK SOCIETY MEETING DATES, SITES, AND CHAIRS

<i>Month</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Chairperson</i>
November	1978	Covington, LA	J. Roberts
November	1979	Dallas, TX	C. Pak
October	1980	Chicago, IL	F. Coe
January	1982	Gainesville, FL	B. Finlayson
January	1983	Salt Lake City, UT	B. Finlayson
January	1984	Tucson, AR	G. Drach
January	1985	Richmond, VA	V. Smith
January	1986	Rochester, MN	L. Smith
January	1987	Sturbridge, MA	M. Menon
January	1988	Chapel Hill, NC	F. Fried
January	1989	St. Louis, MO	J. Gregory
October	1990	Minocqua, WI	N.Mandel
December	1991	Cleveland, OH	M. Resnick
January	1993	Dallas, TX	G. Preminger
January	1994	Birmingham, AL	J. Burns
January	1996	Charlottesville, VA	A. Jenkins
July	1997	Steamboat Springs, CO	P. Chandhoke
January	1999	Gainesville, FL	S. Kahn
October	2000	Albany, NY	M. Moran
February	2002	Cleveland, OH	S. Stroom
February	2003	Wrightsville Beach, NC	R. Holmes
February	2004	Gainesville, FL	M. Hatch
April	2005	Chicago, IL	J. Asplin
June	2006	Vail, CO	H. Koul
March	2007	Dallas, TX	M. Pearle
June	2008	Durham, NC	P. Zhong

need to involve nonmember colleagues from North America and the world. Hence, every member could invite one guest to every meeting. If a member invited no guest, the meeting chairman received the member's proxy to invite additional guests. This resulted in development of superb special guests and speakers at meetings of the Society.

One might say that the period from 1979 through 1988 was the "Golden Age" of the Society, as membership expanded to include such reputable urolithiasis scientists as George Nancollas, Alan Randolph, James Werness, John Meyer, Saeed Kahn, Martin Resnick, Donald Griffith, Floyd Fried, Hibbard Williams, William Boyce, Neil Mandel, Mani Menon, Joe Segura, Glenn Preminger, Gerhard Fuchs, John Burns, Jim Lingeman, and Alan Jenkins. Many of these later additions, however, were urologists, and ultimately Lynwood Smith wrote to Dr. Pak in 1990 to lament that "we have lost (by death or resignation) Finlayson, Meyer, Randolph, Coe (now returned), Werness, Williams . . ."

As of the meeting of March 2007, however, ably chaired by Margaret Pearle in Dallas, Tex., the composition of the organization has again broadened itself to include more nephrologists, other medical fields, and basic science research specialists.

Informality and open discussion remain the hallmarks of the Society. In most meeting settings now, equal time exists for presentation and discussion. Although those early meet-

ings had clustered around the National Kidney Foundation conventions of November, the Society quickly became more independent (Table 1) and by 1980, its independent meeting times and places evolved according to the desires of the membership and chairman.

Beginning in 1997, the ROCK Society added a second yearly meeting for one afternoon as a component of the annual meeting of the AUA. The ROCK Society began in the hallways of the AUA meeting, and it continues now within the meeting rooms of the AUA.

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#### Abbreviations Used

AUA = American Urological Association  
SCOR = Specialized center of research