Michael L. Parks, MD, receives American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons’ Diversity Award

LAS VEGAS (March 14, 2019)—In recognition of his dedication to advancing diversity in orthopaedics, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) today presented its 2019 Diversity Award to Michael L. Parks, MD, clinical director of Orthopedic Surgery at Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) in New York City, during the organization’s 2019 Annual Meeting.

The Diversity Award recognizes members of the Academy who have distinguished themselves through their outstanding commitment to making orthopaedics more representative of, and accessible to, diverse patient populations.

“I am honored to be recognized by the AAOS,” Dr. Parks said. “In order to provide care for an ever-increasing diverse population, we must understand their needs. The diversity of our faces helps with this understanding and ultimately our ability to provide excellent care for the patients we serve.”

“Dr. Michael Parks has been involved in diversity-related conversations and ideas since the moment I met him,” said Ramon L. Jimenez, MD, Dr. Parks’ former mentor-turned-colleague. “He has always promoted diversity in a quiet and effective manner. He works tirelessly to point out and decrease disparities in musculoskeletal care.”

Dr. Jimenez, who also happens to be a past recipient of the AAOS Diversity Award, said Dr. Parks draws students in and offers advice and encouragement. “He knows how to look back, give back, and bring folks along,” said Dr. Jimenez.

Dr. Parks specializes in total joint replacement at Hospital for Special Surgery, where he serves as vice chair for Quality. He also serves on the hospital’s Board of Trustees and is an associate professor of orthopedic surgery at Weill Cornell School of Medicine.

Dr. Parks has led a number of research projects at HSS, with a particular interest in socioeconomic and racial disparities in access to arthritis care and total joint replacement surgery. He has published numerous journal articles related to joint replacement outcomes and racial differences.

In 2018, Dr. Parks was named president of the Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation. He is a former president of the New York State Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons and has served on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons.

Colleagues describe Dr. Parks as an exemplary leader who is actively involved in many organizations and teams working to break barriers across racial, ethnic and gender disparities for both patients and future physicians.

Valerae O. Lewis, MD, chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center, explained, “Dr. Parks is a skilled, thoughtful and caring colleague and surgeon. We need more orthopaedic surgeons like [him], a physician who works to conquer disparities within orthopaedics and within our health care system.”
Dr. Lewis notes Dr. Parks’ work earlier in his career as the chief of orthopaedics at North General Hospital in Harlem, where many black and Latino patients were at risk of not receiving needed treatment. Dr. Parks led the alliance efforts between North General and Mt. Sinai Hospital to improve patients’ access to care.

He currently serves on the steering committee of the Movement is Life Caucus, which seeks to understand and address disparities in musculoskeletal health care. Dr. Parks is also actively involved with Nth Dimensions, a nonprofit organization that works to increase representation of women and minorities in orthopaedic surgery.

Dr. Parks was born in Columbia, South Carolina. He graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry and went on to earn his medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, where he received the President’s Clinical Science Award. After completing an internship in general and thoracic surgery, followed by an orthopedic residency at Duke University Medical Center, he continued his training at Hospital for Special Surgery with a fellowship on the Hip and Knee Service.

Photos of the award ceremony are available upon request.

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**About the AAOS**

With more than 39,000 members, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons is the world’s largest medical association of musculoskeletal specialists. The AAOS is the trusted leader in advancing musculoskeletal health. It provides the highest quality, most comprehensive education to help orthopaedic surgeons and allied health professionals at every career level best treat patients in their daily practices. The AAOS is the source for information on bone and joint conditions, treatments and related musculoskeletal health care issues and it leads the health care discussion on advancing quality.

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