

**HTRS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:**  
**Q&A with Peter A. Kouides, MD**  
**Recipient of the 2019 Dr. Joan Cox Gill Award for**  
**Outstanding Service to HTRS**



Dr. Kouides is Medical and Research Director of the Mary M. Gooley Hemophilia Center in Rochester, New York. He is Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. In his 25-plus years of affiliation with the Mary M. Gooley HTC, Dr. Kouides has served as principal investigator (PI) on a number of retrospective and prospective studies focused on the gynecological and obstetrical complications of von Willebrand disease (VWD) and a local PI on numerous hemophilia surveillance and treatment studies. Dr. Kouides has been Co-chair of the Centers for Disease Control Universal Data Collection Study of Women with Bleeding Disorders and member of the International Society of Thrombosis and Hemostasis (ISTH) Women's Health Issues Scientific Subcommittee. He is Section Co-chair of the American Society of Hematology (ASH) Self-Assessment Program Chapter on Women with Hemostasis and Thrombosis Issues. He is also a member of the VWD Working Group of the National

Hemophilia Foundation (NHF) Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee, and member of the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council from 2006-2012 and again from 2018-future. He is a mentor to the Foundation for Women and Girls with Blood Disorder (FWGBD) Learning Action Network. Dr. Kouides is President of the Thrombosis and Hemostasis Societies of North America (THSNA) 2018-2020. He also directs the World Federation of Hemophilia Twinning Program between the Mary M. Gooley Hemophilia Center, initially with Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from 2009-2013, and presently with Kathmandu, Nepal since 2014.

**Awards include:**

- 2005 NHF Special Recognition Award for research in women with bleeding disorders
- 2007 RGH first annual Dr. Samuel Grove and Dr. Ignaz Semmelweiss "Golden Hand Award"
- 2008 University of Rochester Primary Care Program in Internal Medicine Teaching Award
- 2009 National Hemophilia Foundation Physician of the Year Award
- 2010 Rochester General Hospital Father Norton Award ("Physician of the Year")
- 2014 Hemostasis and Thrombosis Research Society (HTRS) Award of Appreciation as Past President
- 2014 Thrombosis Hemostasis Summit of North America Award of Appreciation as Summit Co-chair

- 2017 Roswell Park Memorial Cancer Institute Fellows Teaching Award
- 2019 FWGBD Ann-Marie Nazzaro Award for Advancing the Mission and Vision of the Foundation

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

### Q: Outside of medicine, what other interests or hobbies do you pursue?

A: I'm involved in the local chapter of the National Center for Exploited and Missing Children (NCMEC), where we take part in a 100-mile race to raise money for the Center. I have a special place in my heart for the underdog, for those who face challenges because they are ill, disenfranchised, or maltreated. I am full-time fundraiser, it seems; I have not met a cause I did not like! Additional examples of recent efforts include the Mary M. Gooley Hemophilia Center triathlon, the Leukemia Lymphoma Society ride, the National Blood Clot Alliance NYC 5-borough ride, and our local Alzheimer's Walk.

As long as it's more than 30 degrees outside, I bike. From April to October, I ride seven miles to work and back. Usually in the morning, weather and time permitting, I take the scenic route – 20 miles round-trip along Lake Ontario or the Erie Canal to the office. It's my daily de-stressor.

I also love photography and travel. Taking pictures is a great way to remember the smiles and sites of a trip. I especially love street scenes and try to capture the whole scene with my wide-angle lens. My wife and I have done "Backroads" trips, including along the Danube and in the Pyrenees. Recently, we took a bike trip to Thailand, which we loved.

The best part of travel is visiting family and friends in Greece, Ireland, the United Kingdom, or Paris. We love to travel "off the beaten track" together.

My wife, Ruth, is an internist/general medicine physician who is a former program director. We have two kids: Andrew, who is 24 and lives in Boston, and Mara, who is 27 and is a social worker in Rochester, NY.

### Q: If you could bring one book and one movie to a desert island, what would they be and why?

I would take *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and try to tackle them both, *and* I would try to read them in Greek. I know enough just to get by now, but I'd aspire to do this. My parents were married in 1953, and my mom was a first-generation immigrant from Greece. My Dad emigrated in 1953. I still have relatives there. As for movies, I'd go with our family's traditional favorites: *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Forrest Gump*. I would also add my personal favorites: the *Godfather I*, *Pay it Forward*, and *The Gods Must be Crazy* (the last two, less well-known gems).

### Q: If you could invite at least three people, living or dead, to dinner at your house, who would you invite and why?

A: I would invite Rochester, New York's own Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglas, and Greg LeMond, the unlikeliest winner of the Tour de France (my first road bike was a steel LeMond). I am presently reading the biography, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*. It would be an incredible roundtable of inspiring stories of persistence and fortitude. Midway through, I would have Ernest Shackleton and Sir Edmund Hillary tap in for LeMond, and Barack Obama and Bishop Desmond Tutu for Anthony and Douglass!

**Q: A genie in a bottle gives you three wishes...what would you wish?**

A: I would wish to be able to take 20 of my best friends and family – as many people as possible – to Botswana, Iceland, and Tibet. I'd love to do this because life is all about relationships in the midst of our surroundings. Second, I'd support St. Jude's Children's Hospital, earmarking funds for gene therapy in Nepal where they are planning to eradicate (in part) hemophilia in developing countries. Third, I'd bike cross country with a support van to pamper me!

## **YOUR CAREER**

**Q: What does "service" mean to you?**

A: From the Book of Matthew in the Bible, I was taught that those for whom much is given, much is expected. Studies show that the more work you do in altruistic pursuits, the happier you are. Often, the giver receives so much more than those who receive. I see that people everywhere are amazing; it makes all the difference in the world to give back.

**Q: Who are the mentors who first inspired you to choose non-malignant hematology as a career?**

A: I did my fellowship at the University of Rochester, where my mentor was Victor Marder, a world-renowned thrombosis specialist and chair of the hematology department. There was an opening at the local HTC and affiliated hospital. In the past 25-plus years, I've been lucky enough to take care of both children and adults; it's wonderful to see when a child is born and care for them throughout their life. I was able to witness how people grow and blossom, from being kids to being parents themselves, and this has been amazing.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about your career today?**

A: The camaraderie of a great team (who are friends also) to do research and deliver the best clinical care possible. I also love the ability to establish these great horizontal (i.e. my Type 2A VWD family of mother and three daughters who also have a Doberman with VWD!) and vertical relationships from birth to adulthood with our bleeding disorder patients (i.e. my severe Hemophilia A patient from childhood just served as our HTC board chair). I love the challenge of a second or third opinion without knowing the first opinion. I love patients caring about me and asking how my family is doing. Most of all, I love feeling just as young and inquisitive and fascinated by new advances as I was in my first year of internship, having so much to learn then as an "R1" and now still as an "R33!"

**Q: Describe a highlight of your career to date.**

A: Our work in heavy menses and PPH is a career highlight. Women with heavy periods are the silent minority in this country. Usually there is a huge focus on boys with severe hemophilia. Twenty-five years ago, we realized we should devote more attention to women with menstrual bleeding issues and post-partum bleeding issues. As for some of our specific studies, one highlight is from a decade ago: our CDC multicenter bleeding disorder-related menorrhagia study showing efficacy of IN DDAVP and tranexamic acid (TxA) (with the latter more efficacious), and I believe that helped the adoption of use of TxA in U.S. women and girls with bleeding disorder-related heavy menstrual bleeding soon after the FDA approval. A more recent highlight is our study showing that a third of our Type 1/Low VWF patients have a normalization of their VWF levels over 5-20 years, i.e. “outgrowing” the laboratory diagnosis. Similar studies in Kingston and Rotterdam have compelled clinicians to serially follow levels years later and take that into consideration when needing surgery decades later.

**Q: What scientific or clinical publication in your field has been most influential to your clinical practice and/or research?**

There are many, but part of my Top Ten List includes the Marilyn Manco-Johnson et al Joint Outcomes study; the DiMichele and Hay high vs. low-dose ITI study; the series of molecular/genetic VW studies from Bob Montgomery, David Lillicrap, David Ginsburg and Jay Sadler; and the series of studies initiated by Francesco Rhodeghiero on the BAT leading to the ISTH BAT. Most recently it's the HAVEN studies as we are transitioning patients to emicizumab faster than I thought even a year ago!

**Q: Why is HTRS meaningful? How do you think the Society should continue to evolve?**

A: You meet so many people to collaborate with through HTRS – it's so much better to do research together, to share studies with others and gain new insights. HTRS has introduced me to many diverse colleagues with whom to collaborate and other physicians whose work intersects with hematology such as Michael Paidas and Andi James. It's an important incubator to bring people together.

## **ON DR. JOAN GILL AND RECEIVING THE AWARD**

**Q: How did your relationship with Dr. Gill influence your life and career? How do you hope to extend her legacy in the world?**

A: Joan influenced me greatly; she was always so welcoming when I first started, because back then, Hemophilia was a smaller group and it was harder to “break in.” She encouraged me to publish my work. Later on, I was fortunate to join her on several steering committees where I was privileged to know her at a personal level, which convinced me that good people can finish first! I hope to pay it forward in small ways by always reaching out to junior trainees at

meetings to collaborate or help them make connections; I try to pay it forward in bigger ways by helping HTRS build its mentor programs further.

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