



IFSSH Newsletter
May 2018

GIANTS, PIONEERS and the FUTURE

Perhaps one of the highest honours which can be bestowed upon hand surgeons is the recognition by the IFSSH and, therefore, by the hand surgery community worldwide that an individual is deserving of the award of Pioneer of Hand Surgery.

Some of the history which relates to the origins of this award may not be known to all. An understanding of this history is helpful in planning for the future.

The IFSSH was formed in Chicago in 1966 at a meeting of representatives of eight hand surgery societies. We celebrated our 50th birthday at the 2016 Buenos Aires IFSSH Congress, now a Federation of 59 societies, and growing. The ideals of the original charter remain to this day. They may be summarised as an intent to further the cause of the development of hand surgery throughout the world. Inherent in this intent is the determination of those blessed with greater socio-economic advantage to support those countries (and those parts of developed countries) which are less advantaged. The inaugural IFSSH Congress was conducted in Rotterdam in 1980 and has been a major component of the hand surgery academic curriculum triennially since then. The first Pioneer ceremony awaited the Tokyo congress in 1986.

The IFSSH Executive Committee and the IFSSH Delegates' Council decided to introduce the Pioneer award at the Tokyo congress. Although the criteria for nomination may have been made more (or less) specific since that time, the principle was, and is, to honour those amongst us who have made exceptional contributions to hand surgery. The current criteria apply to those who are aged 70 years or over at the time of the congress at which the award is to be conferred or are deceased.

What may be less well known to some are the origins of the award of Giant of Hand Surgery. Some consider this to be an award of higher merit, but it is not so. The Executive Committee and the Delegates' Council of the time chose to recognise those who were worthy of the award but who were deceased prior to the 1986 congress as Giants rather than as Pioneers. They date to the 16th century; the list is not all enveloping; and on an occasion another worthy name is added, for example, Julius Casserius in 2016.

In recent times, there has been some discussion as to whether or not the concept of a Pioneer of Hand Surgery has passed. Alternative titles, such as a Master of Hand surgery, amongst others for those worthy of recognition, have been recommended, as has the consideration of more than one level of recognition. Although a case for change may be made when applying a precise, perhaps pedantic, definition to the terms we use, the words of our current President-Elect, Marc Garcia-Elias are powerful. He spoke of the joy and pride in the faces of those receiving the award of Pioneer of

Hand surgery at the Buenos Aires congress, and of the infectious joy shared by those in the audience.

That is enough. Leave things as they are.

This does not mean that we should not reflect upon current realities. An increasing number of societies equates with an increasing number of Pioneer nominations. The time in the triennial congress Opening Ceremony for this component is not open ended. However, your current Executive Committee is adamant that the Pioneer awards remain as part of the Opening Ceremony, and that any change in the present format is less than desirable.

Perhaps this gives us cause to pause and consider. The nomination for consideration by the IFSSH Nominating Committee must follow “approval by the members of the hand surgery society to which the nominee belongs (belonged)”. It must be accompanied by a letter of nomination which confirms this approval, the support of three peers and an abbreviated curriculum vitae. Most importantly, a nomination must reflect exceptional contribution(s) to hand surgery. These may be at a national level or an international level; however, one would expect that, in the main, exceptional contribution nationally would be recognisable and acknowledged internationally. Few of us reach this level, which is not to diminish the achievements of most of us. Our rewards come from the knowledge that we have done our best, acknowledgement of this from our peers, and recognition or awards from our national society.

The IFSSH Pioneer of Hand Surgery Award is applicable to those who have made an exceptional contribution to the world of hand surgery.

Michael Tonkin
Chair, IFSSH Nominating Committee
Immediate Past-President, IFSSH

Nominations for 2019 IFSSH Pioneer honours

The Secretary-General will call for nominations from member societies in September 2018.

The members of the nominating society should agree that a nomination is appropriate according to the criteria in the Charter and the guidelines listed on the website - www.ifssh.info/pioneers.html.

The Society should forward the nomination to the Secretary-General (email: secretary@ifssh.info; administration@ifssh.info) and include:

1. A **letter of nomination** detailing the reasons and addressing the selection criteria, and including the **three letters of recommendation** from peers;
2. An **abbreviated CV** of three pages maximum (including **date of birth** – NB: all nominees must be aged over 70 by 17th June 2019, or deceased);
3. A **photograph**; and

4. **Contact details** of the nominee (or family member if deceased).

Nominations will be considered by the IFSSH Nominating Committee, which requires that all of the above criteria are met and that all nomination details are completed by the date below.

**The closing date for nominations is 17th December 2018.
NO NOMINATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE.**

Future Meetings

Triennial IFSSH Congresses

XIVth IFSSH – XIth IFSHT Congress – Berlin, Germany

17-21 June, 2019

www.ifssh-ifsht2019.com

XVth IFSSH – XIIth IFSHT Congress – London, United Kingdom

2022 (Dates to be confirmed)

National and Regional hand surgery meetings

Please see announcements in the Ezine and listed on the IFSSH website.