

# The WSEF Grant: A New Venture in Discovery and Collaboration

Written by Michaela Calhoun, MS, CCA

2014 marked the 100th anniversary of Walter Spohn's birth, and to celebrate, we want to honor his life's work by giving away the first ever Walter Spohn Educational Fund (WSEF) Grant for research and education in anaplastology. The WSEF has been working to roll out this grant program for several years, and we are excited to see it through this year.

Walter Spohn is known as a pioneer and champion of anaplastology, working throughout his long career as an inventor, researcher, artist, and educator. If you're not familiar with his work, here are just a few of his many accomplishments:

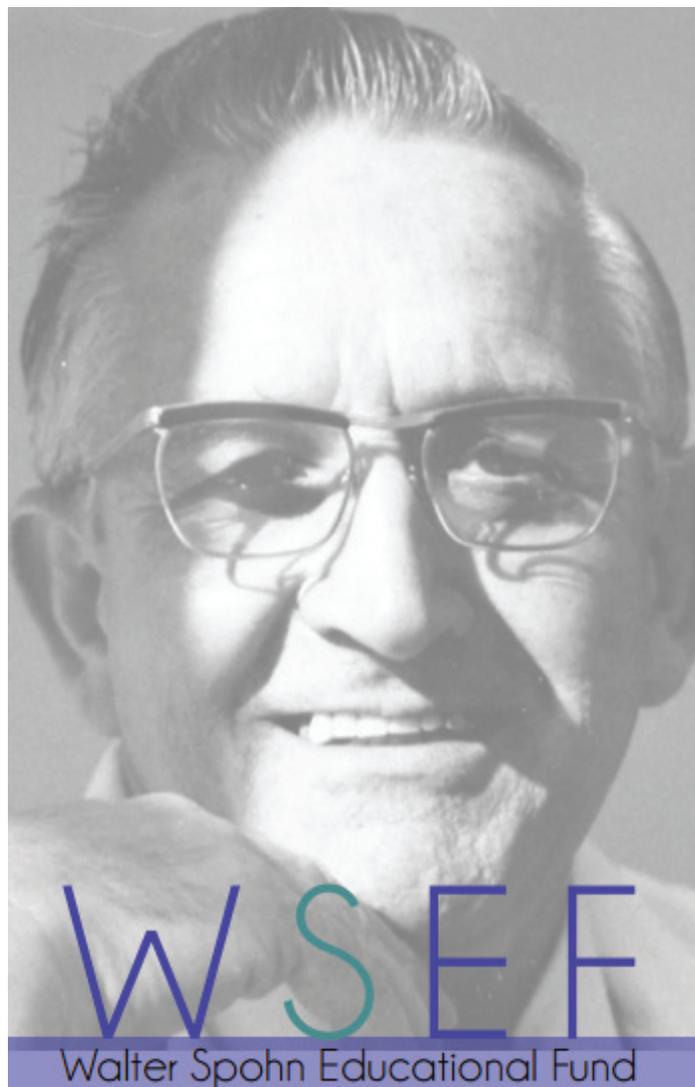
*During World War II, he worked with the VA to help develop new techniques, using plastic to fabricate ocular prostheses, which helped to establish the anaplastologist as a professional member of the medical treatment team.*

*At Stanford University, Walter developed an anaplastology training program with strict and selective entrance requirements to reinforce the high caliber of technical and artistic skills necessary to become a successful anaplastologist.*

*Then, in 1980, Walter founded the American Anaplastology Association to establish a collaborative and cooperative institution to further professionalism, high academic standards, and multidisciplinary membership – the same mission that the IAA still follows today.*

So, to celebrate Walter's birthday and to encourage his spirit of collaboration and discovery, the WSEF Committee established a grant to be awarded annually to a member of the IAA. This grant is meant to empower anaplastologists to experiment and pursue innovation, and to share their knowledge with their colleagues in order to improve and advance their profession.

Today, many anaplastologists, researchers, and educators are struggling to work toward this goal due simply to a lack of financial support. Anaplastologists in educational institutions, hospitals, and private clinics all struggle to budget time and resources to high quality research, yet this type of work is essential for us to continue to improve. Additionally, finding outside funding for anaplastology research is extremely difficult. Rosemary Seelaus, Senior Anaplastologist at



the Craniofacial Center in the University of Illinois at Chicago, has first hand experience with this obstacle. She explained why it's difficult to petition traditional funding and grant resources for anaplastology research: "The patient populations we serve are a high needs population requiring costly treatment, but do not represent huge population volumes compared to other larger patient populations like breast cancer, diabetes or heart disease. In facial prosthetics, we are a much smaller community of professionals, and of patients, so making the arguments to support R&D initiatives that translate into large scale impact in patient care is much more challenging."

One area where research is especially needed today is how to incorporate and adapt new technologies into the workflow of the anaplastologist. Rosemary describes anaplastology as "a niche specialty encapsulated

in an environment of rapidly evolving trends of high-tech medicine, without like means for development, education and patient access." So, with no funding or support, who will do the much-needed research to bring high-tech medicine to anaplastology? The Walter Spohn Educational Fund Grant is a small step toward alleviating this funding gap. We hope to identify motivated anaplastologists who are looking to translate their ideas into meaningful research to share with their colleagues.

Rosemary shared one great example of such an individual: her former student Janet Chao, an anaplastologist and ophthalmologist based in Sacramento, CA. With a background in bioengineering, chemistry, and medical art, Janet is passionate about pursuing research and development as part of her career in anaplastology and she has the skills to do it. She has filed her business under the title "Prosthetics Research Lab, LLC" and hopes to raise money and awareness for anaplastology research. "My long-term goal is to support a research and development group that will improve the body of knowledge and workmanship in the field of facial prosthetics."

With her first project outlined, Janet began to seek funding, but ran into the same issues many anaplastologists before her have faced. She writes, "technology that can facilitate our work is abundant but our field is small and unique. Therefore it can be difficult sometimes to find specific tools that fit our needs. For small practices such as my place of employment, without access to hospital funding, we rely on our own innovations for professional advancement." Janet has begun to overcome this hurdle by turning to the crowd funding website GoFundMe ([www.gofundme.com/sili-print](http://www.gofundme.com/sili-print)) and plans to sell items inspired by anaplastology and ophthalmology on the website she is developing.

Janet has not received any financial support from the Walter Spohn Educational Fund, but her pioneering spirit and dedication to educational research in anaplastology exemplify the character that we seek to support with the WSEF Grant. We are encouraging all IAA members to home in on that research question

that you're always asking yourself and fill out an application this Fall for the 2014/15 WSEF Grant cycle. The application along with more information about the grant can be found online (links provided below).

The WSEF Grant is meant to fund project-based research and educational programming that will advance the field of anaplastology as a whole, so there are some restrictions on what type of project we will fund. Additionally, as a fund administered by the Vesalius Trust for Visual Communications in the Health Sciences, we follow their guidelines and regulations regarding funding restrictions. These include: no funding for individual educational opportunities, travel expenses, or developing or promoting commercial products. We are looking for high-quality, well-organized proposals that follow established principles for conducting scientific research. More information about the WSEF Grant guidelines and restrictions is available online (links provided below).

Please contact the WSEF Committee with any questions regarding the application process or project ideas. We are available to help all IAA members navigate the WSEF Grant process without any conflict of interest. The WSEF Grant proposals are judged and ranked by an independent scientific committee of anaplastologists and related professionals, who are not given the names or any identifying information about the applicants. If you are interested in serving on a future WSEF Scientific Committee, please send us an email.

We look forward to inaugurating the WSEF Grant as an institution of discovery and collaboration in Walter Spohn's honor!

**WSEF Website:** [www.otoart.org/otoart---wsef.html](http://www.otoart.org/otoart---wsef.html)  
**Vesalius Trust Website:** <http://www.vesaliustrust.org>  
**WSEF Email:** [wsefund@gmail.com](mailto:wsefund@gmail.com)

**WSEF Committee Chair: Michaela Calhoun**  
**Vice-Chair: Erin Stevens**  
**Secretary/Treasurer: Megan Thomas**

## Congratulations to the Everyone who Sat for the CCA Exam

Congratulations to all the IAA members who wrote the Board for Certification in Clinical Anaplastology (BCCA) Exam at the 2014 Conference in Denver. Colette Shrader, Michaela Calhoun, Megan Thomas, Rosemary Seelaus and Amanda Behr can now add Certified Clinical Anaplastologist to their list of credentials. Well done ladies!

