

SSR Beginnings

Skeletal radiology (later to become musculoskeletal (MSK) imaging or musculoskeletal imaging and intervention) as a specialty area of radiology began quietly in the late 1970's. Skeletal radiology did not exist as an established discipline previously, and fellowships were not available as they were in other areas such as neuroradiology, pediatric radiology, nuclear medicine, etc. Individual arrangements had to be made with programs in orthopedic or rheumatologic centers if "fellowship equivalent" experience was to be acquired. No national organization existed to foster skeletal radiology development or to provide leadership in resident training, research, specialty representation or continuing education to those who focused on skeletal radiology. Only a handful of skeletal specialists could be found in radiology departments, largely in orthopedic hospitals; growth and organization were both necessary and inevitable.

It was in this environment that Bonner Guilford was given the freedom to establish a skeletal radiology section at the University of North Carolina, after completing skeletal "fellowship" training. Realizing that the needs above were not being addressed, Dr. Guilford designed the framework for a skeletal radiology society, located radiologists with skeletal interest in the southeast United States and, together with Bill Montgomery (his resident and future skeletal radiologist), drafted proposed bylaws. The decision to begin in the southeast was made for the purposes of gauging interest, learning the mechanics of managing such a group and attempting to avoid conflict with the International Skeletal Society. Expansion of the new society could begin slowly, and when membership and organization were adequate, nationalization could be undertaken.

The initial meeting occurred in Hilton Head, SC, in July, 1978 with participation of ten radiologists from throughout the southeastern states. There was approval of bylaws, election of officers and committees, consensus for yearly meetings and agreement that the meeting should remain private for "skeletal" radiologists. The initial name of the society would be the Southeastern Society of Skeletal Radiology. The first officers elected were Bonner Guilford, President, Jeremy Kaye, President Elect, John Gehweiler, Secretary/Treasurer, and Cosmo Haun, Member at Large. At that meeting, radiologists also giving strong support for the

concept of the SESSR and subsequent expansion were Anne Brower, Terry Hudson and Bill Daniel, all future presidents of the Society. In the months following the meeting, the society was incorporated in the state of North Carolina, and tax exempt status was obtained from the IRS; everything needed was finally in place.

Society membership expanded slowly in the early years of the Southeastern Society of Skeletal Radiology, but proceeded more rapidly in the second five year period, corresponding to growth of skeletal radiology nationally and the addition of Kentucky and Maryland to the defined societal region. Increasing requests for membership from outside the southeast, as well as the development of a strong, supportive membership core, convinced members that the time for expansion had arrived. At the Society meeting in 1989, the bylaws were formally amended and the Society of Skeletal Radiology became a national organization representing our specialty. The bylaws were amended for expansion again in 2004, extending Society membership to Canadian musculoskeletal radiologists.

The SSR Timeline contains our collected documents, records and significant events, including many photos of SSR meetings. The SSR Timeline records the rich history of the SSR and parallels the growth and development of musculoskeletal radiology in North America.