

Training Honduran Surgeons

HOWARD W. SMITH, MD, DMD, has been training Honduran surgeons since 1995 (**Figure 1**). He established the first plastic and reconstructive surgery residency program in Honduras. The program is based in the Hospital Escuela in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. In 1998, Juan Carlos Funes graduated as the first Honduran-trained plastic surgeon from Dr Smith's program and currently serves as the Chief of Service. Dr Smith travels to Honduras 4 times a year to administer examinations and to train the residents in surgical correction of cleft lip and palate, other head and neck anomalies, and maxillofacial surgery. Associate faculty have included Drs Joseph Haddad and Edward Chang. The Honduran faculty includes plastic surgeons who have trained outside Honduras and have since returned to Tegucigalpa to help in the training of the residents. In his efforts, Dr Smith has emphasized the importance of training the native surgeons to undertake surgery on their own and to work self-sufficiently without foreign help. During his visits, Dr Smith and his team along with the residents perform approximately 15 to 20 cleft lip and palate procedures a week and hold clinics that exceed 60 patients with a mix of preoperative evaluations and postoperative follow-up appointments. Dr Smith would like to encourage participation from other physicians in the Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. This past January, Dr David Powell joined the team to bring his expertise on microtia to the residents (**Figure 2**).

Dr Smith's mission began back in the late 1980s and has recently celebrated the graduation of the first Honduran-trained plastic surgeon,



Figure 1. Dr Howard Smith in the operating theater instructing Dr Luis Gonzalis.



Figure 2. Left to right, Drs Edward Chang, Luis Gonzalis, Howard Smith, Carlito Flores, and David Powell.

with the prospect of many more to come. We applaud Dr Smith's humanitarian efforts and his tenacity to see that his vision remains alive.

Edward W. Chang, MD, DDS
 Facial Reconstructive Surgery Center
 750 Welch Rd, Suite 317
 Palo Alto, CA 94304
 (e-mail: mdface@mac.com)

LifeCell (Branchburg, NJ) donated acellular dermis for training purposes for the residents in Honduras.