



2015 Quilligan Scholars: Reflections from 2016 SMFM Annual Meeting



(Once again) roaming amongst the giants of Maternal-Fetal Medicine

A year has passed since the honor of the Quilligan scholarship was bestowed upon us. This year, in Atlanta, knowing what to expect and having formed an intimate community amongst our cohort, the excitement was twice as grand. Once again, we found ourselves roaming amongst giants. We walked among the trailblazers and innovators of our field. We had the privilege again to be the guests of Drs. Ted Quilligan, John Queenan, and Larry Platt.

Being part of the Quilligan Scholar program has not only opened many doors, but it has bestowed confidence in us to aspire to become better physicians, scientists, leaders and teachers. The relationships that we have established with the mentors from last year's meeting have not ended, but rather blossomed. The community that we have established amongst each other is electrifying and surely life-lasting.



In the spring between SMFM meetings, we attended a weekend-long biostatistics course taught by Drs. Grobman, Macones and Cahill in Chicago. Each of us continues to reference our notes from that course as we crunch through data. These gifted faculty members translated difficult concepts of biostatistics into simple and applicable modules to put to use in our research.



During the two SMFM Annual Meetings we attended as Quilligan Scholars, twenty distinct leaders gave their time to mentor us and we are truly grateful for that. Our mentors included: Drs. Aaron Caughey, Alan Tita, Alfred Abuhamad, Alison Cahill, Bill Grobman, Bob Silver, Brian Mercer, Charly Lockwood, Cynthia Gyamfi-Bannerman, George Saade, Josh Copel, Kate Menard, Laura Riley, Mary D'Alton, Mary Norton, Mike Foley, Ron Wapner, Uma Reddy, Vince Berghella, and

Yoel Sadovsky. These perinatology leaders have shown us that mentoring does not only entail the transfer of knowledge from person to person, but also the aptitude in leadership and professionalism. Their humble attitude, enthusiasm, and devotion are contagious and inspire us to follow in their footsteps. As we return back to our respective programs, our intellectual curiosity has heightened and our passion re-invigorated, and we are ready to translate emotion into action.



The Quilligan scholarship has made marks on both our professional and personal lives. We have gained much knowledge and acquired mentors that we could have only dreamed of. We are incredibly indebted to the never-ending support of Drs. Quilligan, Queenan, and Platt, to Michele Prince, to the donors who support this program and The Pregnancy Foundation, and to the mentors that gave us this opportunity and shared their contagious enthusiasm. Each of these individuals have in some shape, size, or form changed our lives for the better, and now it is our duty to improve the lives of others. Thank you for this opportunity.



With utmost gratitude and thanks,

Yalda Afshar, Jacques Balayla, Mark Clapp, Ahize Eke, Ibrahim Hammad