JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery, 1999 to 2014
The Path Is Made by Walking
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...the path is made by walking.
Antonio Machado, Campos di Castilla, 1912.

JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery (then the Archives of Facial Plastic Surgery) was launched with great optimism 15 years ago. The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS) had long desired a specialty journal in facial plastic surgery but also valued its roots in otolaryngology and its long-term relationship with the Archives of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery. In addition to being the official journal of the AAFPRS, we had initiated a special section, “Facial Plastic Surgery News,” under Editor Byron (Ron) Bailey, MD, which I edited for some years. This section reviewed and highlighted the innovative science presented at the AAFPRS meetings. This mutually beneficial relationship between the AAFPRS and Archives of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery continued under the charismatic leadership of Michael E. Johns, MD. The many trips to Emory for his editorial board meetings are fondly remembered by his editorial board members. Each meeting began with a short but stimulating discussion related to the bigger issues of medicine, often including ethical insights.

In the later 1990s, an ad hoc journal committee of the AAFPRS was tasked to investigate beginning a journal dedicated to plastic surgery. Requests for proposals were sent to major publishers; all responded positively. In one of those serendipitous events that occur throughout the history of our specialty, we were considering these when I attended one of Mike Johns’ editorial board meetings for Archives of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery at Emory. I explained to him that the AAFPRS had decided they wanted to begin a journal dedicated to facial plastic surgery but also to continue their relationship as best possible with his journal. Mike listened and understood. Rather than try to dissuade me and the society, he suggested we stay in the JAMA family and begin a sister journal: the Archives of Facial Plastic Surgery. The idea seemed almost too good to be possible, but I went to Chicago and met with Robert L. Kennett, vice president for publishing at the American Medical Association (AMA). After initial discussion we drafted the business plan and mission statement for our new Archives specialty journal. George Lundberg, MD, then the JAMA editor in chief, was supportive. A key concept was that it would be a multispecialty journal, publishing the best science from the many specialties that contribute to facial plastic surgery. We put together a multispecialty editorial board and mission statement. That statement guides us to this time:

- Promote the art and science of facial plastic surgery by publishing significant peer-reviewed articles on all aspects of reconstructive and cosmetic surgery of the head and neck.
- Promote the education and contributions of physicians worldwide.
- Provide a forum to present important and relevant issues in ethics and public policy.

Our first issue went press in January 1999 and began with a joint editorial from Mike Johns and myself introducing the journal and affirming our continued commitment to the family of journals.

The early years of the journal required some intense work by the editorial board members and reviewers. The real credit for our success, however, goes to the amazing and dedicated JAMA and Archives journals staff. We have been fortunate to work under 3 exemplary JAMA editors, each of whom supported us and worked with us in the development of the journal: George Lundberg, MD, Cathy DeAngelis, MD, and Howard Bauchner, MD. In this short editorial, I can’t begin to thank all of the many staff who have been essential to our growth and success over the years. I must, however, mention Cheryl Iverson, who was my main source of wisdom in all things editorial for so many years. Jan Thyng in my home editorial office and Lauren Fischer in the Chicago office have been the essential hands-on editorial staff that make it all work. In recent years Annette Flanagan has been instrumental in helping us successfully manage the intricacies of the medical publishing world. There are so many wonderful individuals from editorial processing and production staff, to illustrators, to web editors and more. You know who you are, and I thank you with all my heart.

The journal has continued to evolve and improve over the years. As the official journal for the International Federation of Facial Plastic Surgery Societies (IFFPSS), we began to publish quality manuscripts from around the globe. We published theme issues on Asian Facial Plastic Surgery, Pediatric Facial Plastic Surgery, Oculoplastic Surgery, and more. Our print issue publication frequency increased from quarterly to 6 issues per year, and the journal now publishes articles online every week. The journal’s impact factor has doubled from 0.8 to 1.6 and has a 5-year impact factor of 1.8. Opportunities such as multimedia and the possibility to publish “online first” are immensely positive for facial plastic surgery and could not have been foreseen 15 years ago. We have become leaders in evidence-based medicine and many other areas from facial nerve studies, to tissue engineering, to outcomes analysis in nasal surgery. I must thank our editorial board as a group for their...
continued and wise guidance. We have an excellent strategic plan and I see nothing but continued innovation and advances in years to come.

I must end by thanking my two associate editors, Peter Hilger, MD, and John Rhee, MD. They have provided the insights, creativity, and the occasional reality check needed to keep us on the path we have chosen. I couldn’t be more pleased both personally and for the future of JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery that Howard selected John Rhee as the new editor in chief.

John Rhee has the scientific credentials, altruism, and credibility in organized medicine to maintain the best of our history, but also take us in new and exciting directions.

Finally, I must thank all of you for giving me this amazing opportunity. For 15 years I have been able to read and review great science, interact with all of you in the facial plastic surgery community, and help create a foundation for the next generation to build upon and improve. I consider all of you part of my extended family. Thank you.