

# Robert F. Spetzler

Robert F. Spetzler (born 1944) is a neurosurgeon and the J.N. Harber Chairman of Neurological Surgery and Director of the Barrow neurological institute in Phoenix, Arizona.

He is also Professor of Surgery, Section of Neurosurgery, at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson, Arizona.

Spetzler specializes in cerebrovascular disease and skull base tumors. Extremely prolific, he has published more than 300 articles and 180 book chapters and has co-edited multiple neurosurgical textbooks, including *The Color Atlas of Microneurosurgery* (2000).

## Biography

Spetzler was born in Stierhöfsetten (Oberscheinfeld, near Würzburg) in Germany where his parents had been evacuated to due to the Second World War. When he was 11, he moved with his parents to the United States. He performed spectacularly in the American school system, despite the fact his first language was German.

He received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1967 from Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. He spent a year at the Free University of Berlin, and then entered medical school at the Northwestern Medical School in Chicago in 1967, receiving his M.D. in 1971. He completed post-graduate training at Wesley Memorial Hospital-Northwestern and a residency in neurosurgery at the University of California, San Francisco,[1] training under Charles B. Wilson.[2] In 1983, Spetzler was named Chair of the Division of Neurological Surgery at Barrow Neurological Institute. He was named director in 1986.

Spetzler played a dominant role in the use of the standstill operation in treating large or dangerous cerebral aneurysms.

One notable application of this method occurred in 1991 when Spetzler successfully removed a large aneurysm in a 35-year old American woman named Pam Reynolds. Prior to the operation proceeding, Reynolds was placed under general anesthesia, then had her eyes taped shut and a monitoring device placed in both of her ears. She was later induced into clinical death by Spetzler and his team, which was necessary for the operation to take place. Despite being clinically dead and under intense monitoring and medical observation whilst the procedure was ongoing, Reynolds claimed to have had a profound near-death experience in which she was able to accurately recall the sequence of events within the operating theater, the surgical instruments used, and the conversations that had taken place. In an interview that took place for a BBC documentary in 2002, Spetzler affirmed many of the observations that Pam had made and later admitted that he had no explanation for them.[4] In February 2007, Spetzler performed his 5,000th aneurysm procedure.

He travels and lectures frequently on the most recent advances in neurosurgery.

## Awards

1977, Annual Resident Award, 27th Annual Meeting of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons

1994, Honored Guest, Congress of Neurological Surgeons (youngest surgeon to be so honored)

1999, Herbert Olivecrona Award, the "Nobel Prize of Neurosurgery"

2004, Honored Guest, 4th International Skull Base Congress

2009, William B. Scoville Award

2010, Founder's Laurel, Congress of Neurological Surgeons

## Selected publications

Spetzler has written more than 300 articles and 180 book chapters, as well as co-editing multiple neurosurgical textbooks. A partial list is below:

### Books

Surgery of the Cerebellopontine Angle. Nicholas C. Bambakidis (Author), Cliff A. Megerian (Author), Robert F. Spetzler (Author). Pmhp USA; 2009. ISBN 1-60795-001-4

Medicine, Miracles, and Manifestations: A Doctor's Journey Through the Worlds of Divine Intervention, Near-Death Experiences, and Universal Energy. John L. Turner (Author), Robert F. Spetzler (Foreword). Career Press; 2009. ISBN 1-60163-060-3

The Color Atlas of Microneurosurgery W. Koos (Author), Robert Spetzler (Author), Johannes Lang (Author), J. Zabramski (Author), Robert F. Spetzler (Author), Joseph M. Zabramski (Author). Thieme; 2000. ISBN 0-86577-780-2.

Pediatric Neurovascular Disease: Surgical, Endovascular and Medical Management. Michael Alexander (Editor), Robert Spetzler (Editor). Thieme; 2005. ISBN 1-58890-368-0

### Articles

Contralateral interhemispheric approach to deep-seated cavernous malformations: surgical considerations and clinical outcomes in 31 consecutive cases. Zaidi HA, Chowdhry SA, Nakaji P, Abila AA, Spetzler RF. Neurosurgery. 2014 Jul;75(1):80-6. PMID 24618803

The Anatomy of the Callosomarginal Artery: Applications to Microsurgery and Endovascular Surgery. Cavalcanti DD, Albuquerque FC, Silva BF, Spetzler RF, Preul MC. Neurosurgery. 28 January 2010. PMID 20124934

Safety of carotid endarterectomy while on clopidogrel (Plavix). Wait SD, Abila AA, Killory BD, Starke RM, Spetzler RF, Nakaji P. J Neurosurg. 29 January 2010. PMID 20113164

Miniaturized handheld confocal microscopy for neurosurgery: results in an experimental glioblastoma model. Sankar T, Delaney PM, Ryan RW, Eschbacher J, Abdelwahab M, Nakaji P, Coons SW, Scheck AC, Smith KA, Spetzler RF, Preul MC. Neurosurgery. 2010 Feb;66(2):410-7; discussion 417-8. PMID 20087141

Cerebral cavernous malformations. Incidence and familial occurrence. Rigamonti D, Hadley MN, Drayer BP, Johnson PC, Hoenig-Rigamonti K, Knight JT, Spetzler RF. N Engl J Med. 11 August

1988;319(6):343-7. doi:10.1056/NEJM198808113190605 PMID 3393196

Preliminary personal experiences with the application of near-infrared indocyanine green videoangiography in extracranial vertebral artery surgery. Bruneau M, Sauvageau E, Nakaji P, Vandesteene A, Lubicz B, Chang SW, Balériaux D, Brotchi J, De Witte O, Spetzler RF. Neurosurgery. 2010 Feb;66(2):305-11; discussion 311.PMID 20087130

Using ex vivo proton magnetic resonance spectroscopy to reveal associations between biochemical and biological features of meningiomas. Pfisterer WK, Nieman RA, Scheck AC, Coons SW, Spetzler RF, Preul MC. Neurosurg Focus. 2010 Jan;28(1):E12.PMID 20043716

Supracerebellar infratentorial approach to cavernous malformations of the brainstem: surgical variants and clinical experience with 45 patients. de Oliveira JG, Lekovic GP, Safavi-Abbasi S, Reis CV, Hanel RA, Porter RW, Preul MC, Spetzler RF. Neurosurgery. 2010 Feb;66(2):389-99.PMID 20042987

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