



THE PHOENIX SOCIETY'S

world burn congress

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Key Biographies for the 2008 World Burn Congress

Amy Acton, Executive Director of the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors

Amy Acton is a burn survivor who has 13 years experience as a burn nurse and manager. She has dedicated her career to working with burn survivors because of her own personal experience as a survivor of an electrical burn injury in 1981.

Acton is a member of the NFPA and the American Burn Association. She is past Chair of the Burn Survivors Support SIG. She has also served on the ABA Ethics and Rehabilitation committees and currently serves on the ABA Prevention Committee. In 2002, she was awarded the ABA Burn Prevention Award. She is co-chair of the new joint committee of the Phoenix Society and American Burn Association focusing on Aftercare and Reintegration.

Acton remains extremely involved in the expansion of burn recovery services for those injured locally, regionally and nationally along with the dedicated Phoenix Society staff and volunteers.

Bob Deits, Keynote Speaker – Oct. 2, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

Bob Deits has been a minister in the United Methodist Church for 43 years. Prior to his retirement in 2002, he served as senior minister of Velda Rose UMC, Mesa, for 13 years. For the past 29 years he has specialized in helping people cope with major loss experiences, including death, divorce, relocation, traumatic injury, sexual abuse as children, and job loss. His book, *Life after Loss*, has become a classic in the field of loss and grief. It is highly respected by professionals and deeply appreciated by those who have experienced a major loss. Bob is a frequent speaker and conference leader on a wide variety of subjects related to the many aspects of loss and grief recovery.

Leslie Smith, MD, Keynote Speaker – Oct. 3, 9 to 10 a.m.

Leslie Smith is an internal medicine physician in Boone, N.C. She was burned on Aug. 21, 1984. Her burn injury dramatically changed her life and opened her eyes to a need that she could address once she recovered.

Leslie entered the medical profession out of frustration with our health care system after being burned when she was 24 years old. After she left the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center in Chapel Hill, Leslie was discharged to a homeless shelter in Raleigh and had difficulty returning for follow-up care. She had wonderful strangers step in and assist her with every need from shelter, food, bandages and transportation to and from the burn center. These angels rescued her and lifted her up. Because of them, Leslie was able to return to school and received a full scholarship to Duke University. Leslie's

hope was to be a research scientist but fate had other plans for her and she ultimately went on to complete her medical training at East Carolina University and the University of Louisville.

Leslie's professional focus is on indigent care. She has been on many mission trips to Third World countries. She also runs a local free clinic and currently she is working on a project to address the lack of available health care to the working poor.

John O'Leary, Keynote Speaker – Oct. 3, 10:30 to 11:45 a.m.

As a 9-year-old boy, John was burned on 100 percent of his body and given less than a 1 percent chance of surviving the first night. He endured months in the hospital, years in therapy, dozens of surgeries, and lost all his fingers to amputation. John overcame these significant and painful challenges and today enjoys a wonderful life. He is a college graduate, business owner, philanthropist, husband, and father. He now shares his inspiring and empowering message with audiences internationally.

Robert Hall, Keynote Speaker – Oct. 4, 9 to 10 a.m.

Robert Hall is a burn survivor who many recognize for his role as the coroner, Dr. Albert Robbins, on CBS's hit series CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. He has amassed numerous credits in film and television, including appearances in *The Practice*, *The West Wing*, *Family Law*, *Touched by an Angel*, and countless other TV shows. His feature film work includes roles in *The Negotiator*, *Class Action*, and *Starship Troopers*.

Hall also performs voiceovers for commercials, cartoons, and narrations. His role as a burn survivor in the movie *Class Action* closely parallels his life. In 1978, an 18-wheel truck hit his car and he was severely burned when his gas tank exploded. After several months in a burn unit and the amputation of both legs, he now walks comfortably on two prosthetic limbs. A devoted community activist and one of the most prominent disabled actors working today, Hall proudly serves on the Board of Directors of the National Organization on Disability. He just completed his term as a National Board Member of the Screen Actors Guild and is National Chairman of the Performers with Disabilities Caucus for SAG, AFTRA and EQUITY. He sits on the boards of The Mark Taper Forum's "Other Voices Project", Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors and The Media Access Office. He is a member of the Mutual Amputee Foundation and often visits recent amputees

Cpl. J.R. Martinez, U.S. Army (Ret.) Burn Survivor

J.R. Martinez was born in Shreveport, LA on June 14, 1983. He enlisted in the United States Army in September 2002 and underwent Basic and Advanced Training at Fort Benning, Georgia where he gained skills as an 11-B Infantryman. After reporting to Fort Campbell in January of 2003, he was assigned to his unit 2/502 Delta Company.

He was deployed to Iraq in March of that same year. In April 2003, J.R. was serving as a driver of a Humvee when his left front tire hit a landmine and he suffered severe burns to more than 40 percent of his body as well as smoke inhalation. He was then evacuated to Landstuhl, Germany for immediate care and then eventually Martinez arrived at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio, TX to begin his road to recovery. He spent 34 months at BAMC, undergoing 32 different surgeries, including skin grafts and cosmetic surgery.

After his recovery, he joined the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes as a National Spokesperson in 2004. He has since worked with CSAH to promote their financial assistance and support programs to other wounded service members and inspire the lives of others through his amazing story of

resilience, perseverance and optimism. While J.R.'s experience is certainly life-changing, amazingly JR claims this is actually a change for the better. He's discovered it's what's inside a person that matters most and devotes himself to showing others the true value in making the most of every situation.

Doug Auld

Artist of the State of Grace Portraits (www.dougauld.com).

In 2005 Doug completed a three-year Art project called "State of Grace" consisting of 10 large-scale portraits of adolescent and young burn survivors. The New York Times featured the project in a front-page story of their Metro section in June of 2006. This project can be viewed at www.dougauld.com.

A finalist in the 2007 Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition, his painting "Shayla" was displayed at the National Portrait Gallery at the Smithsonian in Washington DC. Doug is the first Artist to display a burn survivor portrait at the National Portrait gallery.

Doug's latest work is titled "Back from Iraq " (portrait of Corporal J.R. Martinez) oil 50"x 60" 2008. The painting will be part of an upcoming show called "Remnants of War " that will open on Jan. 7 at the New York Arts Club in New York City. J.R Martinez is a US soldier and veteran of the Iraq war who was badly burned when his vehicle hit an IED.

See more about Doug Auld and his painting in the Feature Story Ideas page

Robert Feeney, burn survivor of the Station Night Club in Rhode Island

Robert Feeney is a burn survivor of the Rhode Island Station Night Club fire. He shares the story of rebuilding his life after losing his fiancé in the fire and coping with the very public response to the fire throughout the nation over the last five years. He is active at paying it forward by working to prevent another tragic fire by advocating for safety and sharing the message of burn recovery and volunteering for the Society.

Barbara Quayle, Speaker, World Burn Congress and Burn Survivor

Burned in car accident after being hit by a drunk driver in 1977, Barbara found that there were virtually no aftercare or support programs for burn survivors. For the past 25 years, she has been working to create programs to help burn survivors recover renew and return confidently to their lives. She has coordinated the Image Enhancement Program at World Burn Congress and published the "Book of Image Enhancement" for burn survivors. She also has been a leader in developing the national resource Journey Back a school reentry resource to assist children with burn injuries return to school. She won the 2006 Breslau Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Burn Community and the American Burn Associations' prestigious Curtis P. Artz Service award for making a difference in the burn community.

Duane Wright, firefighter, burn survivor

Duane was burned as a wild land firefighter. He is an active volunteer in the national program Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery and frequent speaker at World Burn Congress. Duane is currently completing his Social Work degree.

Sarah Bazey

Sarah attended Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minn., where she earned a bachelor's in psychology and then attended Harvard Business School of Owner President Management (OPM).

She has been the President, CEO and owner of Simplex Construction Supplies, Inc. since its inception in 1987. She has also been a director and shareholder at Patriot Bank Minnesota since its inception in 1998. Sarah survived a helicopter crash in 1994, suffering severe burns to 40 percent of her body. She is a trained SOAR volunteer at Regions Hospital, St. Paul, Minn. and a Board member of the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.

Megan Bronson, APRN, BC

Megan Bronson is a Board Certified Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist in private practice as a consultant and psychotherapist. She is a certified trauma consultant through The Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children in Detroit, Mich., and an approved EMDR therapist through the EMDR International Association.

She has extensive experience, both nationally and internationally, in the areas of complicated grief and loss, trauma and traumatic loss, adjustment to illness, and death and dying issues. She was a workshop leader with the Elisabeth Kubler Ross Center in Virginia until its closing in 1995 and led grief and loss workshops and trainings throughout the United States, as well as in other parts of the world.

Megan helped to develop and is on the national advisory board of "SOAR", (Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery), a peer support recovery program for burn survivors offered through The Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors. She has facilitated many retreats for burn and cancer survivors and is a frequent speaker and presenter on pediatric and adult grief, loss, and trauma related issues. She is on the Professional Advisory Board of The Phoenix Society and is the author of *"Helping Children to Heal the Effects of Loss and Trauma After Burn Injury: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers"*.

Bonnie Woodruff

Bonnie Woodruff is a native North Carolinian who now lives in Raleigh. She received a BSN degree from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. She is married, has one daughter and 3 granddaughters. Bonnie's son, Ben Woodruff, died in a fraternity fire at UNC-CH in 1996. He was 20 years old.

After being told that fire sprinklers could have saved Ben's life, she has been a fire sprinkler advocate for over a decade. She has been a speaker at the National Fire Sprinkler Association convention, and Campus Fire Forum No. 8. She has testified before a Wisconsin State Legislative Subcommittee to encourage passage of a state law requiring sprinklers in dorms and lobbied in Washington, DC for passage of the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act. She is presently on the advisory board of Common Voices Coalition. This Coalition is made up of six advocates who either has lost a loved one in a fire or is a burn survivor. Their goal is to promote national fire safety agendas for commercial buildings, residential housing and campus fire safety

Christine Jirus, MSW

Christine became involved in the burn community after her burn injury eight and a half years ago. She was burned Nov. 24, 1999 in an explosion at her high school. The chemistry teacher was doing an experiment with methanol and did not take proper precautions. It exploded, and she happened

to be the one sitting closest to it, receiving burns to approximately 20 percent of her body. Since then, Christine has had a passion for working with other burn survivors and their families and for finding ways to prevent similar accidents from happening.

Christine has been working for the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors as the Program Coordinator since the beginning of 2008. She helps manage many of their programs and is very excited about being a part of the organization. Christine finished her Master of Social Work degree in August of 2007 at the University of Denver. She did her undergraduate work at Grand Valley State University.

Dr. Bruce A. Cairns, North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center

Dr. Cairns is an associate professor of Surgery with the UNC School of Medicine at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA in 1989. He first came to Chapel Hill for a general surgery residency. He remained as a Trauma and later Surgical Critical Care Fellow. He is certified by the American Board of Surgery and currently serves as Medical Director of the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center.

Burn Survivors from North Carolina

Retired Chapel Hill Fire Department Battalion Chief **Bill Minton and his wife Polly Dickson**, an Assistant Nurse Manager with the North Carolina Jaycee Burn first met at the World Burn Congress in Cleveland, Ohio in 2003. They were married in 2004 by the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center's chaplain.

Dale Smith of Elizabeth City will be attending the World Burn Congress for the first time in Raleigh. Dale is a firefighter with the Elizabeth City Fire Department and is active in several programs supporting burn survivors. He was recently elected president of the NC Red Knights Motorcycle Club.

Diane Garrison of Durham was burned as a child and has been recently trained in the Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery (SOAR) peer support program. Diane will be sharing her thoughts and feelings on the World Burn Congress blog.

Blake Tedder of Chapel Hill was burned at age 15 and has been recently trained in the Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery (SOAR) peer support program. Blake will be sharing her thoughts and feelings on the World Burn Congress blog.

Marnita Jones of Henderson was burned as a teenager and has been recently trained in the Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery (SOAR) peer support program. Marnita will be sharing her thoughts and feelings on the World Burn Congress blog.

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