AWARD SPEECH

FOR

M. BAKHOS, MD

It was Cicero who said, “To live is to think.” I believe **“**To live is to **thank**.

Dr. Brubaker, thank you for your kind and generous introduction.

Ladies and Gentlemen, friends and family, esteemed colleagues and distinguished guests; it is a great pleasure to be here and a tremendous privilege to receive the Stritch School of Medicine Medal for 2015. I am so grateful to receive this award especially knowing that I work every day with physicians and staff who are equally deserving. I have dedicated my life to medicine and throughout my history with Loyola and Stritch I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to be a part of such a vital and respected institution. I have experienced the gamut of vantage points afforded to me thanks to the various responsibilities I have had and each one of those opportunities has allowed me to hone my skills as a surgeon and a teacher and a “forever” student of medicine.

There is no way that I could possibly have dedicated myself to my medical career without the support, love, and encouragement from my family. To my wonderful wife Wafa who is the heart of the Bakhos operation, thank you for all that you've done and given to our family and me. You always manage to be there and place all of your energy and thought into raising three incredible children. Your patience, spirit and devotion are unparalleled. To our children Joe, Lara and Alan, if children are the mirrors of their parents, then I am humbled and proud to see myself in your reflection. Someone once said that success is having raised happy, healthy caring children. Joe, Lara, and Alan, I would have to say you are our most precious achievement. Along with your spouses Jessica, Joe and CJ, and our gorgeous grandchildren Ellie, Nathan, Charlotte, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**?**), I have more than a lifetime's worth of blessings. I am so happy to have my brother and his beautiful family here with us tonight. Thank you Moe for being with me from the beginning of my journey, and for all the love and support you have given the entire family and me. I am blessed to have a close community of friends who are always loving and supportive… they are like family to me.

Partnership is essential in every phase of life, I am so fortunate to have had some incredible partners at Loyola and CSA and I thank you for your skill, knowledge and devotion. I am so proud to be your partner. I would like to express thanks to a very special and unique person, Bryan Foy, who is like a brother to me, Together and with John Greco and Ruddy Altergott we formed the CSA on a handshake. It turned out to be one of best cardiac surgery groups in the nation, and Bryan is the brains and the soul of our operation. I am so fortunate to be your partner.

I work every day with a talented group of people and to all of my nurses, assistants, OR team members, ICU team, post op services, thank you for your hard work, commitment and loyalty. To the cardiac anesthesiologists, our cardiologists and all other specialists, your knowledge and skill have inspired me every step of the way. You’ve all kept me on my toes and I have to say I am a better man and surgeon for the lessons I have learned from you. For our friendly administration team under the leadership of Larry Goldberg thank you for the support, partnership and great vision

While awards are wonderful to receive … And I am definitely keeping this one in very prominent place, just knowing that you helped a patient to heal and go back to enjoy life is truly reward enough, the real motivation for me is to be able to care for patients that really need skills, compassion, and attention. Lives hang in the balance based on what we can or can't do for each unique case and to see a patient survive and thrive is an incredible blessing. I marvel when they give us gifts and wonder if they realize  that watching them progress and heal is the greatest gift we can receive.

Ben Carson said in the Republican Presidential debate that he removed half of the human brain and the patient lived. Here at Loyola we remove the entire heart and in some situations both lungs and replace them with donor's organs and soon after the patient goes back to an active life. This is the **real** gift of life. These types of medical miracles occur on dally basis here at Loyola.

It is a great feeling to come to work every day at the Institution that has the same mission as mine: to treat the sick without discrimination, to put the patient in the center of every thing we do, and to also treat the **human spirit.**

I also have the privilege to teach and work with our outstanding group of medical students. To witness their growth and to guide them as they search for solutions to problems facing the medical community, and to support them to achieve their goals is a real pleasure. Their enthusiasm is pure and genuine and through the work of the medical school we are building future generations who will build on our legacy while reaching even more milestones. Thank you Dr. Brubaker for your leadership and commitment to make Stritch one of the very top medical schools.

Albert Schweitzer said, “At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by the spark from another person.” I thank all of you for keeping the flames within me sparked and ready to give back to those around me. It is with deep humility and appreciation that I accept this most incredible recognition. I will cherish it always. Thank you