**GRADUATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**SHABNAM KASHANI**

Hello everyone. To family, friends, colleagues and distinguished guests, it is a pleasure to see you and to have you here to celebrate the achievements of our talented, dedicated, and esteemed program participants. To those of you moving on today, whether from our residency or fellowship programs, believe me when I say that it has been an honor and a privilege to work with all of you…. To mentor you… to collaborate with you…. And most importantly, to **LEARN** from you as well. I believe the benchmark of true excellence is revealed in the dedication and enthusiasm one brings to one’s profession. It’s the passion and curiosity, combined with a genuine interest to treat and heal, that makes a great physician. Across the board, I must say that I am proud of this year’s accomplished candidates.

Although I wish I could spend **HOURS** espousing the virtues of every single one of our graduates… don’t worry… **not really**… I won’t … you’re all safe… (**Wait for the laugh**), I **DO** want to take a few moments to congratulate Dr. Annemieke Wilcox. It doesn’t take that long to express my admiration for Dr. Wilcox. Although you might think I’d be tempted to break out in song, especially as an homage to the late, great Tina Turner….(**Wait for the laugh),** this year’s fellowship recipient is **SIMPLY THE BEST.**

With passion for her career and mission and an abundance of compassion for her patients and purpose, Dr. Annemieke Wilcox has proven how special she is over and over again. In her personal statement that was offered as part of the application process for the Minimally Invasive Gynecological Surgery Fellowship, Dr. Wilcox demonstrates insight and a dedication, drive, and empathy that is both rare and treasured. When she expresses that she wants to be the kind of surgeon with whom she would trust her most precious connections… her own family, it is easy to understand the greater purpose that drives this woman in every aspect of her life. This surgeon is someone who has been there. As both patient and medical professional, she knows the questions that need to be asked, the mysteries that need to be addressed and solved, and the compassion it takes to create an environment of relentless intelligence and empathy for the people she serves. As a dedicated, involved, perpetually curious student of life and of medicine, Dr. Wilcox knows the importance of continuing the search for answers… the need to continually “peel the onion,” so to speak…. to persevere in the quest for answers and resolutions to medical mysteries in order to fulfill her own mission to be great, because as she herself has stated, “I want to be great because I believe my future patients deserve nothing less.”

As Annemieke moves on from her time spent here, many thoughts have come to mind. California, and in particular, Corona del Mar, is about to welcome a real gift. As she moves with her family…. her talented husband, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and adorable daughter, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and sets up her practice, Dr. Wilcox continues the process of applying her considerable skills to all aspects of life. Hopefully, her ability to apply logic and global thinking will come in handy as she navigates real estate rental markets that shockingly are… so… uh… **special** in Southern California. (**Wait for the laugh**). As always, as the phrase goes, “**My money is on her**…” but good luck with those rental fees!!

Ernest Hemingway has said, “The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.” I must say that my relationship with Annemieke Wilcox has proven this statement time and time again. Because of who she is and the dedication and integrity she brings to everything in her life, **TRUST** is the most precious term I can use to describe this fine human being. I know, unequivocally, that I can trust Annemieke with everything…not only in an operating room, but in every aspect of life as well. I would trust her with my money… my life… my kids… and I don’t say that lightly.

Dr. Wilcox, I congratulate you on your accomplishments. I honor you for the time we spent together. I applaud you in advance for the work you will continue to do for the lives that need your calm, assured, elegance and touch in order to heal. I thank you for showing me what trust truly is. Congratulations and thank you!!