Kevin C. Chung, M.D.
Charles B. de Nancrede Professor of Surgery
Professor of Surgery

When Medical School faculty members receive major awards, like those presented through the Dean’s Awards Program, in addition to recognizing family and leadership, they often give special thanks to mentors who have shown them the way and made a difference in their careers.

Kevin C. Chung, M.D., M.S., acknowledges that many people have helped him along the path to becoming a world-renowned hand surgeon and holder of the Charles B. De Nancrede Professorship in Surgery. But, he also likes to think of the thousands of patients he has helped over the years as his closest mentors.

“I am often asked who are my mentors, and I never hesitate to say that my mentors are my patients,” says Chung, a member of the Section of Plastic Surgery in the Department of Surgery for more than 20 years. “I listen to them, I treat them meticulously, and I follow them carefully. My patients trust me, and I treasure that trust. I humbly accept this award on behalf of my patients.”

Those who nominated Chung for the Outstanding Clinician Award agree that he is extremely devoted to his patients. They say he is a steadfast patient advocate who consistently attempts to help patients who have been told there are no other options. He also is well known as an outstanding researcher in hand surgery and a leading authority on outcomes research in hand surgery and plastic surgery.

Chung came to the University of Michigan in 1995 as the school’s first Robert Wood Johnson Scholar. He has gone on to build the Hand Surgery Program into one of the premier hand surgery training programs in the United States and a referral center for complex problems. This has not always been an easy road, given the unique challenges of hand surgery encompassing multiple specialties.

The establishment of the Hand Surgery Program — a combined orthopedic and plastic surgery hand group — is the culmination of Chung’s vision to create a clinical care center for patients with traumatic, complex congenital or reconstructive needs of the upper extremities. The group now includes four plastic surgery hand surgeons and three orthopedic surgery hand surgeons, as well as numerous residents and fellows.

Under Chung’s leadership, the Hand Surgery Program is recognized for its elegant reconstructions of mangled extremities, as well as creative management for a variety of complicated conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, spinal cord injuries, congenital hand problems and difficult wrist conditions.

“Dr. Chung is a gifted surgeon who is being referred for some of the most challenging surgical problems that only a few in the world can perform.”
— Erika D. Sears, M.D., M.S., assistant professor of surgery