

From the President's Desk

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We need to connect, inspire, and embrace

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October 2025—For my inaugural column in CAP TODAY, I’d like to begin by saying thank you. Thank you, CAP members, for the honor of allowing me to serve as your president. Thanks to my mentors, peers, and colleagues for helping me along this path. And my deepest gratitude to my wife, Jenny, and my daughter, Jasmine, for the extraordinary journey that began in China and led to my own American dream in the U.S. and to Louisiana, where I practice.

My background isn’t that of the traditional pathologist in this country. I’m the first international medical graduate to be elected president of the CAP. When I came to the U.S.—with two suitcases and \$166—my idea was to stay here for two years so I could advance my career faster with American training. It was my research supervisor who convinced me to stay. Throughout my career as an academic pathologist, my goals were to write books, teach, do research, and take care of my patients. But then I got involved with the CAP. Now I have a new focus: I want to listen to pathologists and to medical staff working in the lab. We’re pathologists, but we are patients too, and we all have valuable opinions about what’s working and what isn’t in our field.

The theme to my CAP presidency is “Connect, Inspire, Embrace.” These ideas mean a lot to me and they define my vision for the future of the CAP. In the next few columns I’ll come back to each concept in more depth, but for now I’d like to give a brief description of why I see them as so important to pathology and all of us who practice it.

First and foremost, we must connect. We cannot work in silos. Instead, we must forge new, meaningful, and productive alliances. That means connecting across subspecialties, practice settings, and generations of pathologists—and connecting with our clinical colleagues while asserting our critical position in delivering patient care. We are not behind-the-scenes consultants, but essential diagnosticians whose expertise drives treatment decisions.



Dr. Zhai

Next, we must actively inspire and invite others into our community. The CAP is the premier pathologists’ organization, and it is our responsibility to grow our ranks. We need to be deliberate, genuine, and compelling, extending an invitation to those who remain on the periphery: nonmembers, new graduates and young professionals, and underrepresented voices in our field. Our impact as a

community multiplies with each new voice we welcome. We can inspire others through mentorship, teaching, and publishing. We can take the opportunity to participate in programs and advocacy led by the CAP.

Last but not least, we must embrace the future, not fear it. Our landscape is transforming rapidly. Digital technologies, virtual consultation, and artificial intelligence are no longer optional. I know some of us feel threatened by new technologies. If the pace of invention and adoption makes you uneasy, you're not alone. But these tools and technologies are here, and we will be better served by positioning ourselves as drivers of innovation rather than as deniers. I believe these tools, if used right, could eventually help us shorten the time it takes to turn around a pathology report, make administration run more smoothly, or make the process of laboratory inspections more efficient without sacrificing rigor or quality.

As your president, I promise to listen intently to our community and to be a champion for innovative ideas. I will support initiatives that increase the influence, visibility, and value of pathology and pathologists. And I will advocate relentlessly for policies that properly recognize our critical contributions to health care.

My term comes at an important time for our field. With diagnostic medicine advancing at an unprecedented pace, the role of pathologists has never been more critical to the future of health care. The CAP has a distinguished history, but I am convinced that our greatest contributions are yet to come. Together, we can connect, inspire, and embrace in ways that will improve pathology and help us provide even better care to our patients.

Finally, I would like to thank Don Karcher, MD, for serving as president of the CAP for the past two years. His dedication and passionate leadership will be a role model for me during my own term.

Dr. Zhai welcomes communication from CAP members. Write to him at president@cap.org.



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