

# Meet Executive Council Member, Dr. Karim Alavi



I am the proud husband to Shirin, and father of twin boys, Parsa and Radeen. The boys are starting their sophomore year in high school. They are extremely smart, they clearly get that from their mother, and do extremely well in school. They are also high level soccer players. Radeen, the midfielder, plays on a MLS Next team which won its Division last year and advanced to the Round of 16 of the MLS Cup in Nashville in June. Parsa is a goalie and his NAL (National Academy League) team made the NAL playoffs in New Jersey last year but didn't make it out of the group stage. Parsa couldn't make the trip as he suffered a Boxer's fracture in the last minute of the last game of the regular season which the team won, qualifying them for the playoffs.

I was born in Tehran, Iran and immigrated at the age of 8, with my mother and older sister, to Washington, D.C. about 2 years prior to the Islamic Revolution in 1979. My father, a prominent dentist and a Professor of Dentistry at Tehran University, did not join us until years later due to limitations on travel as result of the Iran-Iraq war. I grew up in Northern Virginia and became an avid fan of all sports teams from D.C., especially the Washington Redskins. My early teen and adult years were highlighted with 4 Super Bowl appearances with 3 wins and countless playoff memories. Then the team was sold and the dark cloud of Dan Snyder descended on the team. Fortunately, those days may be coming to an end under new ownership.

I am the Program Director of the Colon and Rectal Surgery Fellowship and the Director of Research for the Department of Surgery at The University of Massachusetts Chan School of Medicine. I currently serve as a member-at-large on the ASCRS Executive Council. I am currently the Vice Chair of the Committee on Committees and the Council representative to the Awards Committee and the Rectal Cancer Committee. I am also the Section Editor for the Current Status Reviews section of the Diseases of the Colon and Rectum.

Over the course of my career, my focus has centered around excellence in patient care, innovation in surgery, mentorship of learners from high school to residents and fellows, and health services research. I am proud of the career successes of the students, residents, and fellows who I have had the great privilege to mentor. Since leading our research efforts in the Division, we have been fortunate in recruiting multiple clinical trials, leading innovative and, hopefully, impactful research, and, above all, mentoring very talented residents and students. What really keeps me going, especially on the difficult days, are the patient thank you letters and messages. It is easy to forget why we go to work every day and the importance of such an interaction to your overall well-being.

What gives me the greatest joy is helping them train in the off season and standing on the sidelines cheering them on (nervously and mostly quietly) during games.