

2009 ABS Ulrich Henschke Award: Michael J. Zelefsky, M.D.



It is a pleasure to honor Dr. Zelefsky with the 2009 ABS Ulrich Henschke Award. The Henschke Award is the most prestigious award presented by the ABS in recognition of contributions made to the profession.

Dr. Michael Zelefsky received his M.D. degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York in 1986. He completed his Residency at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in New York where he was the Chief Resident between 1989 and 1990. He was then subsequently appointed to the faculty of the Department of Radiation Oncology, where he has devoted most of his clinical research to the area of prostate and head and neck cancer.

Dr. Zelefsky was appointed Chief of the Brachytherapy Service at MSKCC in 1997. He helped develop and pioneer intraoperative conformal planning for prostate brachytherapy at that time, which incorporated sophisticated inverse-planning algorithms and intraoperative dose-volume histogram tools for enhancing the quality of low-dose-rate prostate brachytherapy. These innovations were then adapted into commercially available systems to allow for real-time planning. These innovations have further enhanced the ability of the brachytherapist throughout the world to perform more consistently higher quality brachytherapy procedures, which has in turn led to improved clinical outcomes. Dr. Zelefsky has also made important contributions to the field exploring uses of brachytherapy and its integration with functional imaging such as magnetic resonance imaging spectroscopy, as well as the role of dose escalation and intensity-modulated radiation therapy in the management of prostate cancer. He continues to explore with his colleagues the use of enhanced real-time high-precision methods of seed implantation and high-dose rate brachytherapy.

Dr. Zelefsky is currently Professor of Radiation Oncology and remains a prolific, internationally recognized and respected clinician and clinical researcher. Dr. Zelefsky is the author of well over 200 peer-reviewed papers, mostly in the area of genitourinary oncology. He has served the American Brachytherapy Society (ABS) for many years with great distinction. In addition to being a Board Member and the Society's Secretary and Treasurer (2000-2002), Dr. Zelefsky served as the Society's President and Chairman of the Board between 2003 and 2005. He was the Scientific Program Coordinator for the highly successful International Meeting for ABS and Groupe Européen de Curiethérapie–European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (GEC ESTRO), which took place in Barcelona in 2004. This meeting served as a critical milestone for establishing strong ties that continue to exist between the two societies.

Dr. Zelefsky is currently the Editor-in-Chief of Brachytherapy, the official journal of the ABS. Now in its 8th extraordinarily successful year, the journal is the only one of its kind devoted to brachytherapy and recognized for its high-quality, peer-reviewed publications. It achieved Medline status early on and has brought further recognition to the ABS as the pre-eminent society in the world for representing brachytherapy in oncology.

Dr. Zelefsky lives with his wife and four children in Manhattan. He is an accomplished musician who enjoys playing the piano for relaxation.