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Jacqueline Perry (May 31, 1918-March 11, 2013), known among her peers as the Grande Dame of Orthopaedics, was one of the first 10 board certified orthopaedic female surgeons. She earned wide attention for her work in analyzing human gait. Her 1992 text, *Gait Analysis: Normal and Pathological Function*, became a standard text for orthopaedists, physical therapists, and rehabilitation professionals. She is most known for treating polio victims in the 1950s by developing surgical techniques for spinal fusion and development of the “halo” device for treatment of cervical spine fracture. She died in her home in Downey, California, at age 94.

The Perry Initiative was established in her honor. It is a non-profit program supported by engineers and orthopaedic surgeons, aimed towards introducing young women to the fields of orthopaedics and engineering, with an emphasis on introduction to research in these fields. It is a 1 day program where the students participate in a biomechanical skills laboratory. The skills laboratory is comprised of 6 stations supervised by volunteer orthopaedic surgeons and engineers. This year, the University of New Mexico (UNM) had the opportunity to participate in the initiative. Thirty-nine young high school women, ages 15-18, traveled to the UNM campus from surrounding areas, including Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico. The program was held in the Leonard M. Napolitano, Ph.D. Anatomical Education Center.

The young women eagerly participated in Sawbones™ simulations of femur fracture fixation, distal radius fracture plating, reconstruction of knee ligaments, spine fixation, including pedicle screw placement, and suturing lacerations in pig feet. They also observed a live dissection of a human hand. Volunteers at the event included Kim Fields, Alicia Garcia, Karla Parra-Marrufo, Dr. Ann Mercer, and Drs. Elizabeth Mikola, Selina Silva, Deana Mercer, and Heather Menzer from the Department of Orthopaedics; Ashley Gilbert and Dukens LaBaze from the School of Medicine; and Professor Elizabeth Dirk and Christina Salas from the Center for Biomedical Engineering. Rachel Baeza, Julie Bowers, Jude McMullan, and Ryan Wood from the Department of Orthopaedics and Summer Little from the UNM Women’s Resource Center helped plan the event, which was underwritten by Acumed and the Carrie Tingley Hospital Education and Research



Fund. The all-day Saturday program ended with a panel question/answer session where the young women and their parents asked very insightful questions about what the lives of engineers and orthopaedic surgeons are like, the cost of education and available financial resources, quality of life issues, and the changing healthcare environment.

Despite the use of electric drills, saws, needles, and scalpels for the first time by many of the students, there were no casualties and the young women left with a new appreciation for the opportunities available to them in the fields of orthopaedics, engineering, and research. The feedback from the students and their families and teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Many of them followed up with letters of thanks and requests for mentoring. The orthopaedics department plans to support this program yearly to continue to raise awareness and improve the representation of women in orthopaedics and engineering.