Scientific Sessions 2006 in Chicago was a great success, with the highest professional attendance since pre-9-11 meetings. Thanks to our program committee representatives, including outgoing chair Frank Sellke and incoming chair John Ikonomidis, who worked with the overall program committee to provide surgical and anesthesia input for our plenary sessions, oral abstract and poster presentations, how-to and meet-the-expert sessions, and cardiovascular seminars. The Council was also very pleased to have our own Tim Gardner serve as the overall chair of the Scientific Sessions Program Committee.

The Vivian Thomas Young Investigator Award Competition is gaining popularity with an ever-increasing number of submissions. Five of those submissions were chosen to be the finalists. They included:

- **Andreas Zierer** and colleagues from Washington University School of Medicine presented “Calcium channel blockers impair right atrial contractility and cardiac output in non-responders with chronic pulmonary hypertension.”

- **Lei Ye** and colleagues from the National University of Singapore and Gleneagles JPMC Cardiac Center presented “Transplantation of nanoparticle based skeletal myoblasts over-expression vascular endothelial growth factor-165 for cardiac repair.”

- **Virna Sales** and colleagues from Children’s Hospital Boston and Harvard Medical School presented “Protein pre-coating of elastomeric tissue-engineering scaffolds: Extracellular matrix formation and phenotypic changes of circulating endothelial progenitor cells.”

- **Basel Ramlawi** and colleagues from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School presented “Genomic expression pathways associated to brain injury after cardiopulmonary bypass.” Dr. Ramlawi was the first prize winner.

- **Pavan Atluri** and colleagues from the University of Pennsylvania presented “Acute myocardial rescue with endogenous endothelial progenitor cell therapy.”

We were privileged to hear Dr. Richard Weisel present the William W. L. Glenn Lecture, entitled “Rebuilding the heart: New horizons for cardiac surgeons.”

At our annual Council reception and dinner, Dr. Shukri Khuri of Boston was presented our Mentoring Award by one of his former trainees, Dr. Manisha Patel of Cincinnati.

Each day was filled with opportunities to interact with the entire spectrum of cardiovascular physicians and scientists. We encourage all Council members to submit ideas for next year’s Scientific Sessions in Orlando and to submit abstracts for presentation. Please visit www.americanheart.org for additional information and important deadline dates. You can also review highlights from this year’s meeting at www.scientificsessions.org.

Please feel free to contact me with questions regarding Council activities and if you have additional thoughts on how to enhance the value of membership.