

AGA SECTION

Our New President—John M. Inadomi, MD, AGAF



John M. Inadomi

I am delighted and honored to introduce my friend, John M. Inadomi, who is the incoming 116th president of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) Institute in May 2021. I have known John since 1995, when we started in the Division of Gastroenterology at the University of New Mexico, him as freshman faculty and me as a freshman fellow. We both left the University of New Mexico in 1999–2000, but our friendship continued and our paths crossed several times, most recently on the AGA's Governing Board and Executive Committees. Someone once said life needs to be lived looking forward but only becomes understood looking backward. My hope is that, by tracing his journey and describing some of his multifaceted talents, this biography will provide readers with insight into the making of the future leader of the AGA.

Early Life and Family

John Inadomi was born in 1962 (Photo 1) and raised in Southern California. He went to Estancia High School in Costa Mesa, California, and spent most of his extracurricular time in the pool, either competitive swimming or playing water polo. John has a large extended family that lives primarily in Los Angeles. John is a third-generation Japanese-American. Both of John's parents were interned during World War II, his mother at Manzanar in California and his father at Gila River in Arizona. John's family values education and professional advancement. His father, Minoru Inadomi, obtained his law degree from the University of California, Berkeley after serving in the Korean War, and became an assistant US attorney before going into private practice. John's mother, Tayeko Inadomi, attended the University of California at Los Angeles and became a junior high

school teacher in inner-city Los Angeles. His older sister, Beth, is an attorney who served in both houses of Congress and recently started her own lobbying firm. John's younger brother, David, is an anesthesiologist in Seattle.

John met Kristine Frassetto in his last year of medical school at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) through a mutual friend. Kristine was pursuing a business degree at San Francisco State University and John was about to enter the grueling demands of an internal medicine residency. With both of their schedules stretched thin, they managed to date and, on May 23, 1992, tied the knot in Sonoma, California. Kristine says "I always knew John would be successful at whatever he chose to pursue. I am in awe of his accomplishments every day." John replies "I tell people that I married Kristine because she is a terrific athlete and is the only woman I know who can run a post pattern and catch a football over her shoulder without breaking stride. However, the truth is that any success I have experienced is because of her incredible support, adventurous spirit, and fearless nature in which she has never hesitated to join me on my journey as we moved across the country" (Photo 2).

Kristine and John's nuclear family consists of their daughter Mikaela (Mika), born in Albuquerque in 1997, and their son Eric, born in Ann Arbor in 2004. Mika graduated from Johns Hopkins University (Photo 3) and is working for an aerospace and defense consulting firm in Washington, DC. John notes, however, that Mika informed them that this would be her response if she ever worked for certain government agencies that required the security clearance we know she possesses. Eric is pursuing his passion for music and aspires to become a professional cellist in a major symphony orchestra. After a successful business career in

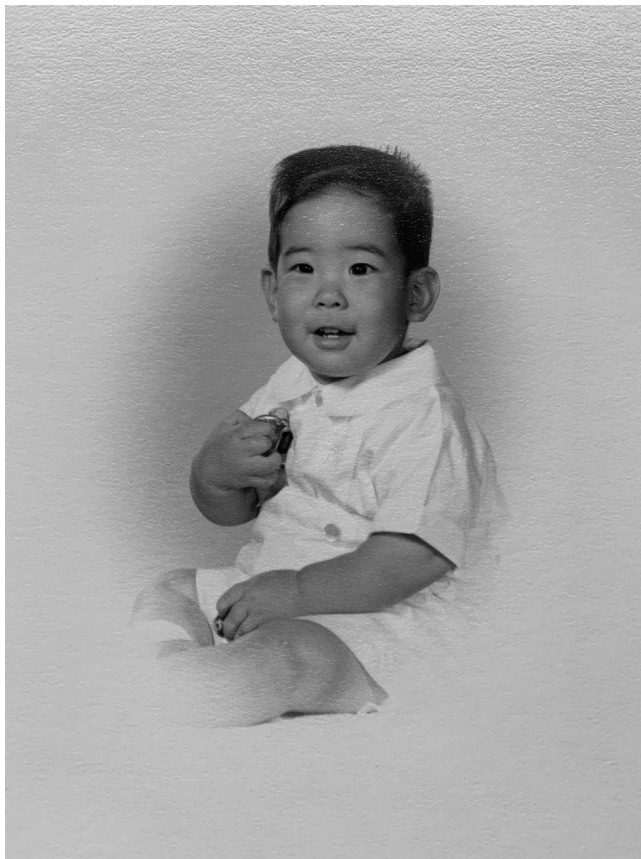


Photo 1. Baby John.

marketing, Kristine is working for a nonprofit organization, Humble Design, that assists families transitioning out of homelessness.

Graduate Education and Training

John has an exceptional educational and training pedigree that is a somewhat conservative reflection of his superior intellect, discipline, and strong work ethic. He received a bachelor's degree in biomechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1984 (yes, he wanted to be an engineer and was really good at it), and his medical degree in 1988 from UCSF, where he also completed his residency in internal medicine and fellowship in gastroenterology. In the early phases of his career, there were signs John was destined to be a hepatologist. As Jackie Maher, one of his mentors at UCSF, noted, "his first publication detailed a method for assessing ascites volume by ultrasonography (PMID 8781322). Ultimately, he changed his allegiance to luminal gastroenterology and became an influential leader of clinical research in gastroenterology at UCSF."

John is one of the most well-rounded academic physicians, having led a clinical gastrointestinal (GI) division research program, guided MDs and PhDs toward excellence in patient care, conducted innovative research, and educated fellows. He is thoughtful, organized, and has the incredible ability to complete multiple tasks on time. He can

elevate the mood and rouse the best from people he interacts with.

The University of New Mexico Years

John was on the faculty of The University of New Mexico (UNM) from 1995 to 1999. Dr Denis M. McCarthy, the chief of gastroenterology at UNM and the Albuquerque Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center, recognized John's talents and made a steal recruit. John's tenure at UNM included serving as the chief of endoscopy for the Albuquerque VA. John worked with one of the exceptional talents in GI epidemiology, Amnon Sonnenberg. Yours truly was the fortunate GI fellow to thrive at the confluence of their talents and mentoring. We would frequently have lunch sitting outside the VA cafeteria and enjoying New Mexico's sunny but mild climate. We would discuss research ideas, world history, pop culture, and even politics. This relaxed ambience and the presence of several exceedingly bright and pleasant people resulted in so many successful research projects.

Amnon reflected, "In retrospect, it is easy to see that John was endowed with three personal traits that made him ideally suited for a successful academic career. First, John had a good solid understanding of mathematics. Calculus was not an alien and feared country to him. John was delighted to see his mathematical skills come to fruition in studying physician behavior, decision making,



Photo 2. Kristine and John enjoy experiencing new places, people, and cultures (here in Amsterdam).



Photo 3. Proud parents at Mika's graduation from Johns Hopkins University.

and health economics, fields that initially seemed light years away from mechanical engineering. Second, John has always been a talented writer. Lastly, John has always had excellent social skills. He has a pleasant demeanor, being friendly and open-minded to suggestions, willing to listen to and collect other people's perspective. After training many fellows and junior faculty over a time period of 4 decades, I still find myself largely unable to predict the outcome of their future careers. One should give them all a fair shake, provide them with multiple opportunities, try to support and pave their way into research as much as possible, and in few rare instances one may even find a John Inadomi."

The Michigan Years

John subsequently joined the University of Michigan from 1999 to 2005. He served as Gastroenterology Fellowship Program Director, Director of Endoscopy, and Chief of the GI service at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center. John honed his research skills through the VA Health Services Research and Development field program and developed his administrative skills in education, clinical operations, and research. Most importantly, John developed many strong relationships with faculty who would shape his career and research interests. He developed a particular interest in patient decision-making and began to apply behavioral economic theory to develop and test interventions to increase colorectal cancer screening adherence.

Back to the University of California at San Francisco

In 2005, John returned to UCSF as the Dean M. Craig Endowed Chair in Gastrointestinal Medicine and started an innovative health services research program—the GI Health Outcomes, Policy, and Economics Research Center, which has spawned many successful clinical investigators. In addition, John served as the clinical chief of gastroenterology at San Francisco General Hospital, where he helped his division chief, Dr. Hal Yee, develop a novel web-based consultation portal for gastroenterology patient referrals called "eConsult."

The Seattle Days

John was recruited to the University of Washington School of Medicine in 2010 as the fourth head of the Division of Gastroenterology in the Department of Medicine and the Cyrus E. Rubin Endowed Chair in Medicine. During his tenure, he secured highly competitive fellowships (including 2 renewals of a GI T32 training grant), increased federal grant funding, more than doubled endoscopic procedures, and established several new endowed chairs and professorships. New research programs developed under his tutelage, including the Center for Microbiome Science and Therapeutics, Center for Liver Diseases Investigation, and the GI Biorepository. "As Division Head at the University of Washington, John was known for his enthusiasm for science and for his willingness to do whatever was needed for the benefit of the division," remarked Cynthia Ko, MD, Professor



Photo 4. A round at Whistling Straights with Joo Ha Hwang, Bill Chey, Phil Katz, Steve Carpenter, Tom McCourt, Mike Harper, and David Greenwald.

of Medicine, Gastroenterology, and Interim GI Division Head at the University of Washington.

The Present: University of Utah

After 10 years of leadership service at University of Washington, John was selected for a new senior leadership position as chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Utah School of Medicine, effective July 1, 2020. In his new role, John oversees the clinical, education, and research programs of the department. The department consists of 12 divisions, making it the largest at University of Utah Health.

Throughout this journey among elite GI divisions, he quickly rose through the academic ranks to tenured full professor due to his substantial scholarly activity, excellent clinical skills, and his natural abilities to excel as a leader and organizer. The ultimate clinician, he has been named “Top Doctor” multiple times, an “America’s Best Doctor,” and a “GI Leader to Know.” Notably, John began his career as a full-time clinician, considered both the endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography and motility guru at the Albuquerque VA; however, he transitioned to physician-scientist, and the vast majority of his effort at UCSF and University of Washington has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Contributions to Science

John is a prolific and well-funded researcher focused on improving quality of care and the prevention and treatment of

esophageal and colorectal cancer. His publications have amassed at least 18,876 citations, and he has an H-index of 66.

John has expertise in comparative effectiveness research. He has received funding from the NIH to evaluate new techniques to decrease mortality from esophageal adenocarcinoma and to test novel interventions to increase adherence to colorectal cancer screening tests. He is also internationally recognized for his efforts to prevent colon cancer and promote early detection of GI malignancies. John’s research interests also include health services and outcomes research. His current focus is optimizing management of Barrett’s esophagus and improving screening to reduce mortality from colorectal cancer. His NIH research portfolio includes CISNET, a consortium of computer simulation scientists who conduct comparative effectiveness studies of competing management strategies to reduce cancer mortality; a collaboration between basic, translational, and clinical investigators to reduce mortality from esophageal adenocarcinoma; and a project to test innovative interventions to improve adherence to cancer screening tests.

Mentoring and Sponsorship

A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you. John had the good fortune of having several mentors. He says “I went into internal medicine because of Marv Sleisenger, and I went into GI because of John Cello. I learned to take care of patients from Jim Ostroff, and I learned how to do a sphincterotomy from Grace Elta. I learned how to be a



Photo 5. John’s new hobby, which may keep the University of Utah Park City Sports Medicine Clinic busy.

scientist from Amnon Sonnenberg, and I learned how to interpret science from Jackie Maher.” He adds, “I blame the golf bug on Bill Chey and Jim Scheiman. I learned to play golf from Joo Ha Hwang. I learned how to forget the last hole from Mike Saunders.” John has unwavering dedication for mentoring faculty and trainees. John is very skillful in mentoring, planning, and strong collaborations with major stakeholders at the local and national level. John continues to be an important advisor for me. There are many individuals like me who have benefited from John’s advice and sponsorship. These individuals are spread across the world. He helps people around him dream big yet keep focused on practical solutions to reach those goals. He also is a keen observer of human personalities, quickly identifying what motivates people and the politics of a situation.

John became my primary mentor early in my GI fellowship. After I finished my fellowship, I applied for career development awards from our specialty societies and was rejected two years in a row. I contemplated leaving academic medicine, but John had more confidence in me and my ideas than I did, and he encouraged me to apply again, but also apply to NIH and Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation. The third year, I was awarded career development awards from the NIH, Damon Runyon, and the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE). John taught me determination, and I still aspire to be as supportive for my mentees as he was for me.—Joel Rubenstein, MD, from the University of Michigan



Photo 6. John cycling on the beach in Kiawah Island with Eric and Mika.

Everyone deserves to have a mentor that cares as much about them as a person as they do about their career. John knows that when individuals thrive, so does their scholarship. More than the professional success and growth I've experienced in working with John, his genuine interest in my personal well-being has been the aspect of our relationship that I treasure most.—Rachel Issaka, MD, assistant professor at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and University of Washington, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

National Service and Recognition

Dr Inadomi took on several national and international leadership roles. John has been an active member of AGA for more than 25 years (joined in 1992) and has served as the chair of the Clinical Practice and Quality Management Committee, chair of the Clinical Practice section of the AGA Council, director of the AGA/American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases Academic Skills Workshop, and co-director of the AGA Postgraduate course. John is a strong advocate for evidence-based medicine research funding and trainee support and has demonstrated this passion while serving as committee chair. He has extensive experience in the editorial process. He is currently an associate editor for *Gastroenterology*. He served on the AGA Institute Governing Board as clinical research councilor from 2015 to 2018.

John has also held leadership roles for the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) and ASGE, as the chair of the Practice Parameters Committee of the ACG, as a 9-year member of the ASGE Research Committee, and through serving as an associate editor for *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy* and the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Personal Qualities

John is a good-natured, kind-hearted person with a bit of a tiger in him when needed. He once informed his faculty: "I consider myself a nice guy. If you can't get along with me, it's more likely to be a problem with you than me." For those who know John, this is spot on. "The few times he has been seen losing his composure have been on the golf course. For example, fourth hole, Gamble Sands, Brewster, WA, September 12, 2018," said Michael Saunders from University of Washington.

John has had his fair share of adversity. When he was a college student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1982, the DC10 he was on, flying from Los Angeles to Boston, crashed into the icy Charles River. Two people lost their lives. Although John walked away physically unharmed, this harrowing experience at a young age taught him the fragility of life. "I am thankful for every day, and I strive to go to sleep every night knowing that I have done my best and have no regrets about my actions or behavior."

Hobbies

John is an athlete and has stayed remarkably fit through a combination of sensible diet and multiple sports, including water polo, tennis, running, and regular visits to the fitness center. However, John's true passion is golf (Photo 4). He enjoys his annual trips to premier courses around the country and abroad. He will not disclose his handicap, but does admit to "stinking up every beautiful hole on *Golf Digest's* top 100 courses you can play." Kristine said "I will never forget the day he called me from Pebble Beach to let me know he just eagled a hole," a feat that can be verified by Bill Chey. Now that he is in Salt Lake City, he has taken up skiing again and can be seen pounding down the mogul runs or shooting between the trees at Snowbird, although with equal frequency he can be seen buried in a snowbank (Photo 5). The ultimate family man, John also developed hobbies with his children (Photo 6). These activities include building and launching model rockets with Eric, which draws quite a crowd at the local park. Kristine says "More often than not, he and Eric are unable to find or retrieve the rockets once launched. So much work for a 15-second thrill." Both Kristine and John are also avid tennis players; however, John never could exceed the national US Tennis Association ranking of 3.5, and Kristine is a 4.0. This explains their family rule that they can be on the same mixed doubles team but can never play competitively together.

Summary

John is an extraordinary person, an innovative scientist, a compassionate physician, a gifted mentor, and an accomplished leader. These are difficult times—a raging pandemic and changing landscape in clinical practice delivery, education, and training. The role of professional societies, including the AGA, needs to evolve to meet these challenges and the needs of their membership base to continue to be relevant in the field. I am thrilled that John is leading the AGA, and I know the whole GI community is in good hands with John guiding our organization. John, we are fortunate to have you as our president. Congratulations and good luck!

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