

## Out of tragedy comes an incredible career: Prosthetist Earl Fogler

September 15, 1959, was a tragic day in Houston. By mid-day, 18 people were injured and six dead following a bombing on the playground of Edgar Allen Poe Elementary School during second grade recess. At the time, no one knew how that act of violence would eventually turn into a positive, by introducing one of its victims to the profession of prosthetics.



MPI's Earl Fogler, a 7-year-old, second grader, was seriously injured in the blast, losing his right leg just below the knee. His relationship with Muilenburg Prosthetics, Inc. began as he was recovering from his injuries.

Earl's recollections of the bombing were shared in the September 2010 issue of O&P Edge magazine. He returned to school about a month after being injured and was fit for his first prosthesis by Al Muilenburg a few days before Christmas that year. (Read the story in its entirety at [http://www.oandp.com/articles/2010-09\\_09.asp](http://www.oandp.com/articles/2010-09_09.asp).)

It's the story after the story that has made a positive impact on the greater Houston community. As Earl tells it, he really didn't consider a career in prosthetics until he was nearing the end of his high school years. "Nothing else really interested me," Earl said. "But I always liked going to the prosthetic shop - it was a part of me."

So he figured out what he needed to do to become trained as a prosthetic technician. While Earl was in tech school in New Orleans, Mr. Muilenburg called and offered him a job. "And I haven't worked anywhere else!" he said.

Over the next 30 plus years, Earl has been an integral member of the MPI team, now a senior practitioner, specializing in body-powered and



**Earl Fogler comparing "feet" with patient Steven B. Earl is wearing the first socket made by resident Charlotte (see page 4). As an amputee, Earl is a great sounding board for feedback for our residents as well as prosthetists and technicians.**

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myoelectric upper-limb prostheses. While employed as a technician, Earl completed short-term courses in prosthetics and became an ABC-certified prosthetist in 1978. He is among the longest tenured prosthetists in Houston and has fabricated close to 2,500 limbs, which by his count number close to 800 upper extremity prostheses and nearly 1,300 prosthetic legs.

Earl finds his job extremely rewarding. He and his fellow MPI practitioners work frequently with children through the firm's affiliation with Shriners hospital. Earl understands how each person's situation is unique and that success is really measured by an individual reaching their personal goals for rehabilitation. "The best part of my job is interacting with people. Helping them," he said. "The atmosphere at MPI, the people I work with are wonderful. I enjoy what I do."

Earl shares that he is an amputee with all of his patients as well. It's a teaching tool to demonstrate and help them understand that missing a limb is not the end of the world. "It's happened, but it is not the defining moment in your life," he said.

In the fifty-plus years since his amputation, Earl has worn a variety of prostheses, all fit and fabricated by the team at MPI. Today, he wears an Otto Bock TEC cushion liner, with sleeve suspension,



**The extended Fogler family including Earl and son, Kenneth, who is an MPI technician (top row on the right).**

and the new Ossur Re-Flex Rotate foot (see story below).

Earl's life outside of work includes being a husband, father, and grandfather as well. He is also a co-worker to his son, Kenneth, who has been a prosthetic technician at MPI since 2007. He also enjoys photography and making stained glass. "I am good at building things and using tools," he said. "It's my profession spilling into my hobbies, too."

Thank you, Earl, for building a career in prosthetics and serving the patients of MPI for so many years!

## Product Spotlight: Re-Flex Rotate Foot

Ossur has introduced a new durable, high performance foot that is ideal for very active and moderately active wearers. The new Re-Flex Rotate with EVO™ offers vertical and rotational shock absorption through a titanium coil spring that reduces pressure and vertical shock forces on the wearer's residual limb. This results in a light-feeling, comfortable foot.

Re-Flex Rotate is ideal for users with daily routines involving frequent side-to-side and turning motions. It is easy to use and is fit to match the wearer's specific needs and height. Utilizing EVO™ technology, the Re-Flex Rotate mimics the natural movement of a human foot with heel-strike to toe-off. EVO allows for a natural gait progression, reducing fatigue and putting less pressure on the amputee's sound side and lower back.

MPI prosthetist Earl Fogler was recently fit with the Re-Flex Rotate foot. Earl has been wearing the foot every day for about four months and shared these impressions of its performance: "Of course, nothing's as good as the original," he said. "But this prosthetic foot performs well. It's smooth walking, has some shock absorption, and the rotation is nice, too."

He added, "I've been wearing Flex Foot/Ossur prostheses for a long time. This newest foot has streamlined features and is easier to adjust. I like it."



Courtesy of Ossur America, www.ossur.com

## MPI Insurance Corner: FAQ

**Question: I have more than one health care carrier. Can I choose which one I want to file a claim with?**

**Answer: No.**

"Coordination of benefits" is the way two or more health plans coordinate their respective benefits so that the total benefit paid is no more than 100 percent of the billed charges. You may contact one of your insurance carriers to explain your benefits and how they coordinate with your other insurance carrier.

There can be substantial differences in the benefits offered between policies. If you have difficulty interpreting the differences, you may wish to have MPI assist you by explaining your benefits after your initial visit. Therefore, it is very important for you to provide a copy of all your insurance cards at your initial visit.

**Pre-Authorization:** If you fail to follow the required pre-authorization procedures, you may have to pay a larger portion of the claim. In some cases, the plan may determine that the services are not covered under the contract and completely deny the pre-authorization request. Please be sure to provide a prescription if necessary.

Please stop by the front desk after each appointment. This helps MPI make sure that everything is in order and allows us to answer any questions you may have. We'll do our best to keep you well-informed and satisfied throughout your rehabilitation program and beyond. *Thank you. Gracias.*

## Patient Survey Gives MPI Staff and Facility High Marks

The practitioners and staff members of Muilenburg Prosthetics Inc. received high ratings on patient care, according to a recent direct mail survey sent to more than 130 randomly chosen patients. Of those returning the surveys, MPI received 98 percent positive feedback.

"We are happy our patients gave us high marks on their overall experience with us," said Ted Muilenburg, CP, FAAOP and president of MPI. "The survey validates our efforts to be a patient-centered practice."

The survey was designed to get the patient's perspective of care, office standards, service and help the practitioners and staff measure their performance and make adjustments where needed.

A sampling of patient comments included:

- "We are blessed to have a company as yours providing Marcos with his needs. Above all very satisfying."
- "Very pleased - front desk friendly and helpful staff-professional, knowledgeable and caring. I got awesome service."
- "I first went to you in 1953. Lots of changes. Good."
- "I would like you to know I will never have a leg built anywhere else as long as you are here and in business. I will also recommend any one I know and meet that may need your services."
- "I think it is great that you're helping the lady that lost her arms and legs."

Ted noted that past surveys indicated that patients liked a team approach to their case and as a result, MPI has implemented that whenever possible. "We utilize the team approach in evaluations and resolving challenging issues. Patients really appreciate that approach. They know we care about their outcomes," he said.



**Above: from left: Al Hayes, Katy Hayes, Loretta Muilenburg and Ted Muilenburg, CP.**



**Left: Katy with some of the case manager meeting staff.**

## Ted Muilenburg Presents Quad Amputee Story to Case Management Society, Houston/Gulf Coast Chapter

Quadruple amputee Katy Hayes, center, was the subject of a talk by Ted Muilenburg, CP, FAAOP, at a luncheon meeting of the Case Management Society of America, Houston/Gulf Coast Chapter. Ted's presentation, "Catastrophic Amputation: Case Study of Katy Hayes, Quadruple Amputee," outlined Katy's ordeal, beginning with the home birth of their third child to the diagnosis a few days later of Group A Strep infection, which resulted in the amputation of all her limbs. Ted ended his presentation by explaining the proper approach for her initial prosthetics and the selection of components for the prosthesis MPI fabricated and fit. Then he turned over the question and answer session to Katy and her husband, Al, who joined him on stage. The presentation also served as Continuing Education Credits for the case managers. Ted noted that the most important objective was that they could understand the patient's experiences, goals, and ambitions. "This objective was clearly met as the case managers gave Katy a standing ovation. They were clearly moved by her story."

## Helping a Fallen Soldier Accomplish His Mission

Ted Muilenburg, CP, FAAOP, and patient Pedro Maldonado were guests at the Independent Pool and Spa Service Association/Houston Chapter meeting, where Pedro was presented a check of more than \$7,000 to help pay for a prosthetic leg. IPSSA chapters throughout Texas made contributions after hearing the story of Pedro's son enlisting in the army to be able to buy his father a new prosthesis to replace the old broken-down one that was literally held together with tape and wire. But before he could do that, Army Spc. Pedro Antonio Maldonado was killed in action while serving in Afghanistan. The presentation was an emotional one for the family, as it was held Jan. 11, the night their son would have turned 21.

"I felt inspired to be with a group of people who care and want to help out people like Pedro," Ted said.

**Following the fundraiser, Pedro was fit with his new prosthesis at MPI. Ted Muilenburg, CP, Pedro Maldonado, and Doug Dinkins, IPSSA/Houston treasurer.**



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## MPI Welcomes Prosthetic Resident Charlotte Begnaud

MPI prosthetic resident Charlotte Begnaud brings a special empathy to her patients. She too is an amputee. As a two-and-a-half-year-old, Charlotte contracted meningococccemia resulting in a Symes amputation.



"When I was in high school, I shadowed my own prosthetist at Shriners Hospital, so there was no guessing what I wanted to do," she said. "I really have an appreciation for MPI's connection with Shriners and the clinics they do."

A native of St. Paul, Minn., Charlotte graduated from Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, with an individualized bachelor of science degree in orthotics and prosthetics. She then attended Century College, White Bear Lake, Minn., graduating with a certificate in orthotics and prosthetics.

As a resident, Charlotte shadows other practitioners and is getting a broad-based understanding of techniques and protocols. She is working under the supervision of Ted Muilenburg, CP, FAAOP, and Earl Fogler, CP.

"I like working at MPI because it is all prosthetics and attracts some of the more difficult and unusual cases, such as PFFD and hip disarticulations," she said. Her resident project is "Outline and Considerations with Hip Disarticulation Amputees," a literature review with the most commonly used fabrication, fit and components reviewed.

Charlotte will be eligible for her licensure exam in May and her Certification in prosthetics from the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics (ABC) in August. She and her husband reside in Houston.