

Tri-Valley doctor will be first Black president of plastic surgery society

Jeanita Lyman | October 14, 2023



Dr. Steven Williams, incoming president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.
(Photo courtesy Tri-Valley Plastic Surgery)

A Pleasanton resident and plastic surgeon with a longstanding practice in Dublin is set to become the American Society of Plastic Surgeons' first Black president, with **Dr. Steven Williams** beginning his term at the head of the organization's board at the end of this month.

Williams has been the society's president-elect since being appointed in 2022, after more than a decade of serving on the organization's Board of Directors and leading Tri-Valley Plastic Surgery in Dublin.

The Yale-trained surgeon found himself in the Bay Area after a foray into Silicon Valley that ultimately brought him to the Tri-Valley, where he has lived in San Ramon and Pleasanton in the years since founding his Dublin practice.

"We very purposely chose the Tri-Valley area for our practice, and the reason why is obviously being near the South Bay, near San Francisco, near Oakland," Williams told DanvilleSanRamon. "Those are major metropolitan areas with a lot of growth."

The central location, in addition to Williams' reputation as a top reconstructive surgeon, have also brought a wide range of customers through the practice, which he said is also something he likes about his field of medicine in particular.

“We obviously have patients of all ethnic backgrounds, of all ages,” Williams said. “That’s the wonderful thing about plastic surgery is we kind of operate on everybody.”

This reality is in contrast to how plastic surgery is often portrayed in the media, and how it is regarded by laypeople, Williams noted.

“I think sometimes aesthetic surgery gets a bad rap due to the kinds of things we see on TV, but it’s in my view a different form of self-care, and that’s one of the reasons it’s gotten popular,” Williams said. “It’s a way to take control and change things externally to match how they are internally.”

While Williams and other plastic surgeons’ doors are open to people from a range of backgrounds with a range of motivations, he said that feeling that one deserves the type of self-care he offers isn’t something everyone experiences equally -- something that struck him after performing work on a nurse and friend of his.

“She said ‘I want to thank you because I didn’t think it was OK for me to want this for myself,’ and that really struck me at such a deep level, that people in our society feel they don’t have the right to feel how they want to feel,” Williams said.

Williams has an eye toward addressing that and other inequities during his time as American Society of Plastic Surgeons president and throughout his career, with his upcoming presidency also symbolizing change for the longstanding organization.

“I’m the first African American president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, and they’ve been around for 93 years, so that’s a long time and it’s probably a little overdue,” Williams said. “I really try to look at this as an opportunity to continue to pave the way and open doors.”

It is for the benefit of his field and medicine more broadly, according to Williams.

“All medical specializations are really stronger when there’s diversity within them, and that’s because it’s important for patients to be able to interact and relate,” Williams said.

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