



Deandrea Collier

Deandrea is one of the brightest, most efficient, compassionate, and dedicated technologists I know. Having worked with Dee as a co-worker and manager for over 20 years, I can confidently say there's no surgical procedure or service line she doesn't excel in. The surgeons she works with adore her, relying on her for far more than setting up a sterile back table. As our Robotic Coordinator, Dee has been instrumental in growing our program to become a designated Center of Excellence, offering 24/7 robotic procedures. She believed in providing better outcomes for our patients and was committed to ensuring this level of care was available anytime it was needed. Though Dee rarely seeks recognition, her dedication and compassion toward her profession, patients, and our organization are undeniable. It's time she is recognized and rewarded for the impact she's made. Thank you, Dee! – Shannon Barlow

Mandi Stone

Mandi is an excellent teacher, allowing students autonomy and the chance to grow on difficult cases, and can quickly problem-solve solutions- Onaca Umak

Christine (Karen) Buxton

Christine is a huge asset to the surgical staffing team! She always arrives with a smile, a great mood, and either a funny story or a movie recommendation. She's always well-prepared for her cases and knows exactly what tray or supply to ask for in a pinch. If I'm ever lost in the Core, I know I can pop into Christine's room for guidance. :) Christine truly exemplifies all of Mayo's values, and you know it'll be a good day if she's on your team! – Kiersten Hicks

Amber Suman

Amber Suman has been a Surgical Tech for 26 years, 16 of those alongside Dr. Heil. She consistently demonstrates excellent patient care, sterility, problem-solving, and organizational skills. Happy Surgical Tech Week, Amber!



Matthew Skrzynski

Matt is a passionate Surgical Tech who embraces challenges head-on. His exceptional critical thinking skills allow him to anticipate with precision, always putting the patient first. His unmatched attention to detail makes him a well-rounded tech with an extraordinary skill set. Matt eagerly shares his knowledge, taking 'see one, do one, teach one' to new heights. He's a gifted and irreplaceable tech—the perfect star! – Marissa Rochefort



Jeronimo Ureta

Jeronimo "Jerry" Ureta, a Surgical Tech at Paradise Valley Hospital, has mastered the cases scheduled there. Jerry frequently calls surgeons to follow up on special requests for procedures, while also educating others on the team. During his downtime, Jerry uses the opportunity to teach, ensuring PVH stays informed about changes in practices. He mentors newly hired staff, holding them to the same high standard of excellence he sets for himself, and also mentors surgical tech students. Jerry often educates others on instruments that are infrequently used in procedures, sharing valuable insights. After a recent tibial fixation procedure, Jerry took detailed notes to share with his team, explaining the case and preparing for potential deviations during surgery—key actions that contributed to the procedure's successful outcome. –Terrice Ferguson



Kristin Lancaster

I'm nominating because of her continuous hard work and outstanding communication with her surgical team, she sets an excellent example for all new surgical techs who join our campus!

Rachel Rogers

Rachel excels at anticipating future needs during surgical cases. Her attention to detail ensures safe patient care and efficiency. Beyond her role, she takes on additional responsibilities, such as assisting with instrument management and facilitating communication with the sterile processing department. –ZJ Juric

Amanda Davis

With over 29 years of service excellence as a certified surgical technologist (CST) specializing in orthopedic trauma and total joint surgeries, Amanda brings unmatched expertise and technical proficiency to her new role. Her extensive experience, precision in the operating room, and dedication to patient care make her an invaluable asset to the orthopedic team. As a preceptor, Amanda has mentored the next generation of surgical technologists with care and commitment. Known for her unique laugh and vibrant personality, she's a social butterfly who fosters a positive, collaborative environment. Strong Memorial Hospital is fortunate to have Amanda's technical prowess, service excellence, and infectious energy on board. -Wilfredo Rivera

Natalea Mariner

Natalea exemplifies technical proficiency in her skills in the operating room. As one of our veteran techs, her wealth of knowledge about various specialties, the multitude of surgeons in our unit, and the instruments and their uses is invaluable in keeping the rooms running smoothly. Her attention to detail makes her an exceptionally irreplaceable member of our team! -Sarah Lansky

Cathy Vitale

Cathy is highly skilled in cardiothoracic surgery, and her work ethic is truly admirable. She tirelessly excels in her role as a surgical tech while also mentoring countless new hires and assisting the team lead with updating surgeon preference cards and call scheduling. She is a fantastic role model! -Fred Attyah

Jonmichael Rodriguez

Jon Rodriguez, also known as Lil Jon, is my choice for an outstanding surgical tech who consistently outshines his peers and impresses his team. His superb attention to detail in case setups and profound knowledge of procedures reflect his expertise in the field. Having been a surgical tech for over 20 years, I know our job can sometimes feel redundant and challenging. Jon constantly reminds me of the excitement of our position and the importance of our role in the surgical team. He inspires me to strive for excellence and to share my expertise with the next generation of surgical techs, ensuring they can help lead the future of our career. -Omar Navarro

Victoria Watson

I have been a labor and delivery surgical tech for 13 years, and working at a large teaching hospital has made me passionate about sharing knowledge with medical students, PA students, and new interns/residents. Guiding them to be efficient in the surgical setting and sharing tips and tricks I've learned over the years for the best outcomes for both mom and baby is something I truly love. I'm proud of what I do!



Marilou Danao

Marilou has become one of the strongest scrubs in our department. Her incredible attention to detail has made her a valuable resource for all new employees and travelers. She's always ready to lend a helping hand and continues to expand her knowledge, troubleshooting issues with ease when they arise. -Laura Pannetier

Amanda Merritt

Amanda is a rock star. As the team lead for our orthopedic team, she scrubs in on any and every case, training new staff in her specialty. She coordinates seamlessly with reps, central sterile, and other departments to ensure everything is ready for our cases. After many years of scrubbing, she became a CSFA—and, of course, she's a rock star at that too. Patient safety and care are always her top priorities. Amanda knows the steps to every case, the details of every supply and tray in inventory, and brings innovative ideas on how to get things done. Beyond her work in the OR, she also assists with scheduling and running the OR desk when needed. Amanda never hesitates to step up and help, no matter the task, and she never says, "That's not my job." I can't imagine our OR without her—she's an invaluable asset to us all -Brandy Keith



Allison Keeran

Allison is an outstanding tech. -Dawn Goldman

Sandra Saavedra

I've been in the practice for 26 years, officially certified for 25 years. I work hard to help my surgeons and contribute to the growth of the profession. I consider myself very knowledgeable, but I don't take for granted that I know everything, because every day is a learning experience. I love what I do and look forward to work every day.



Petra Bond

44 years as a CST/CSFA

Jaqueline Aguirre Palma

With 7 years of experience and time spent on the heart team, I have learned to pay attention to the field and keep up with the steps in the procedure. I think ahead and prepare for the worst, making sure my nurses have close at hand what I may need in case the unexpected happens.

Yvonne Kirksey

She has been a surgical tech for over 40 years, with the skills and knowledge to prove it. Working at the same hospital the entire time, she has witnessed countless changes in the surgical world and has kept up with each one. If you ask her anything, she can set you up for the entire case, including all the "what ifs." She is feisty, fun, direct, caring, helpful, and one of my favorite surgical techs of all time. Even though we don't work together any longer, I will always remember what she taught me and credit her for being the nurse I am today.

-Natalie Gardner



Kimberly King Caldwell

Kimberly is a first assist CST at St. Francis and excels at training other staff members. She is very compassionate about her job and is attentive at all times to what she does. -Tamekia Aiken

Dee Clark

I will be excited to nominate Dee Clark, who has been with Mayo Clinic for over 25 years. She is well known for her valuable experience, and it's amazing to see her perform complex surgeries with such ease and attention to detail. She has made a significant difference in the lives of many patients. Even in the most high-pressure cases, Dee seamlessly manages complex instruments and coordinates with the surgical team to ensure everything runs smoothly and efficiently. She truly exemplifies the spirit of excellence this award represents. -Natalie Marquez



Mario Georges

As our most senior ST, Mario sets the gold standard for going above and beyond in everything he does. Versatile and always up for a challenge, he capably scrubs a wide range of surgical specialties, including orthopedics, general surgery, ENT, urology, robotic procedures, and neurosurgery. His skills and technical prowess make him the most highly requested ST in the department, resulting in a bidding war of sorts to have him assigned. Calm even in the most stressful situations, Mario isn't afraid to speak up. For example, during a total joint procedure, he noted that the surgeon had missed a crucial step and immediately brought it to his attention. The surgeon was beyond grateful, as it saved the patient from needing additional surgery or extended anesthesia time.

As an alternate service lead for the Orthopedic service, he is one of our most engaged STs. His attention to detail and understanding of various procedures have vastly improved the flow of the service. Mario is also our primary preceptor for total joint procedures, contributing to an increase in scrub competency levels for RNs and STs. His efforts have helped decrease total joint procedure turnovers by 20%!

If his surgical skills weren't impressive enough, he is also a skilled cook. His impeccable cooking skills earned him the win in our annual chili cook-off (see picture), proving he truly is a shining star in everything he does!

- Jessica Miller-Jones

Theresa Shackelford

Theresa is very knowledgeable and maintains the best work practices daily, taking pride in her work. She truly cares about her team's success and is dedicated to ensuring the best outcomes for patients. Theresa represents surgical excellence and exemplifies our hospital's mission.

-Celina Brown

Fannie Hood

Surgical Tech Week always falls on my birthday (9/19), so I get to celebrate my life and my career, which is the best choice I made.

I've been a CST traveler for 16 years, worked and lived in over 16 states, performed surgery in over 30 hospitals and surgery centers, and have successfully completed over 40 contracts, working in all services and doing surgery on the entire human body.

For my technical proficiency, I exhibit that by knowing how to perform the surgeries I'm assigned to. Even though I wasn't trained at the hospitals I'm chosen for, having the training, background, and skill (and an ST book for references) allows me to walk into anything from a craniotomy to a small toe removal. If instruments are missing or if something in the case is not going according to plan, I know how to solve it and help move the doctor and case forward.

I exhibit ethical practices by not talking about cases I've been in. As a traveler, you may end up in really life-changing surgeries or even in a celebrity's or sports athlete's case. While we all get experience and enjoy this wonderful career all over the country, we have to understand and be aware of HIPAA. What happens in surgery stays in surgery!

I get to be innovative and continue my education as a traveler, which is why I chose it as my career. There are so many ways to "skin a cat" or perform a laparoscopic appendectomy, and I appreciate doing them every time, everywhere. You get to see the difference in training for not just me but the surgeons as well, and I love that—they enjoy teaching me their way. This career is amazing!



Lee Kleyla

Lee is dedicated to his job, goes above and beyond for his doctors and coworkers, and is a valuable member of our surgery center team. He is always ready to do whatever it takes to get the job done—doing it well and in a timely manner. He never goes unnoticed! He deserves to be a star in more than 100 ways!

—Chelsea Buse



Angela Brison

I am nominating Angela Brison as a surgical technologist because she embodies excellence in every facet of her role. Her commitment to patient care is unwavering, and her presence in the operating room elevates the entire surgical team. Angela's meticulous attention to detail, paired with her remarkable ability to anticipate the needs of both surgeons and patients, ensures that every procedure is executed with precision and care. Her calm demeanor under pressure is extraordinary, turning high-stakes moments into seamless, controlled environments. What truly sets Angela apart is not just her technical proficiency but her dedication to the greater good of her team. She leads by example, mentoring others and creating a collaborative, supportive atmosphere where everyone thrives. Angela is more than a technologist—she is the heartbeat of the operating room, infusing every case with her passion, skill, and relentless pursuit of excellence. Her dedication doesn't just impact the success of surgeries; it transforms the lives of patients and colleagues alike. For these reasons, Angela Brison is a shining star, deserving of the highest recognition. -Thomas Silvera

Christopher Scott

I have been a surgical technologist for 33 years and certified for 7 years. I love my profession. I've had many opportunities to move on from Mayo, but I have always come back. I started in the U.S. Army in May 1991 and served 4 years honorably. I traveled all over the U.S. for 22 years and have been a cardiac surgical tech for over 20 years—that's where my love and passion come from. I've helped start two heart programs in my career and have been a surgical tech instructor. I've also worked in Iraq as a certified surgical tech at the Baghdad Embassy as a government employee.

In addition, I've served on the NVSA board as a Board of Director, Vice-President, and am currently the President. Everything I've done as a surgical tech has been aimed at improving the profession and fostering its growth. I'm so proud to be a CST, and I know I can make a difference.

May Quebral

May is a highly skilled and dedicated surgical tech with remarkable proficiency in handling complex procedures. Her deep knowledge of spine and orthopedic surgeries sets her apart in the operating room. With her technical expertise, she manages intricate tasks with precision and anticipates the needs of the surgical team, ensuring that every detail is meticulously addressed.

May's understanding of both spine and orthopedic procedures allows her to effectively support and assist surgeons, making critical adjustments and handling specialized equipment with ease. This not only enhances the efficiency of the surgical process but also upholds the high standard of patient care she provides. Her calm demeanor under pressure and ability to stay focused ensure patients receive the best possible care during their procedures. -Hector Mendoza martinez

Brooke Purnell

The Operating Room thrives on the seamless coordination of multiple disciplines, and Brooke is an invaluable member of our perioperative team. As the Clinical Practice Leader for the department, I've had the pleasure of working closely with her and can personally attest to her hardworking, passionate, and diligent nature.

Serving as the Specialty Team Technician for the cardiac/vascular/thoracic/transplant team, Brooke has conducted numerous skills sessions for both current employees and students in our surgical technologist training program. Her willingness to share her expertise has been crucial to the overall success of our department.

Brooke is consistently assessing the needs of her unit and adapts her daily activities to ensure the best care for our patients. A natural leader, she is respected by her peers and motivates them to perform at their best. Even in high-pressure situations, Brooke remains calm, thinks critically, and delivers exceptional performance.

Her integrity and accountability are evident in every task, and she has built strong professional relationships across the interdisciplinary teams at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. -Sarah Germanovich

Karen Buxton (Christine)

Christine is always thoroughly prepared for surgery, demonstrating both speed and professionalism in every case. She consistently anticipates the surgeon's needs, ensuring that all necessary supplies are gathered ahead of time. Her talent for teaching new staff members is remarkable, as she patiently guides them through procedures. Christine's passion for her work shines through in everything she does, making her a true role model. She is, without a doubt, our STAR. -Ewa Strzelec

Daniel Newton

I have been a tech for 22 years, and Daniel is one of the best I've seen. He's not afraid to step up and step in when needed. He's the guy who says hello and good morning to everyone, gives out high fives, and makes people feel seen and part of the team. Daniel always speaks up in staff meetings, addressing the important issues and advocating for what we're all here for: patient care.

I've watched him clear 20 pans in 10 minutes, all while carefully inspecting each instrument to ensure it's free of any bioburden. His dexterity is incredible—like watching Tommy Lee spin his drumsticks. Daniel is truly a Rock Star! I greatly appreciate everything he does for me, our fellow techs, and our patients. My hope is that every facility has a Daniel Newton on their team. -Mary Sauls



Laura Harris

Laura is very hardworking and smart. She knows the doctors she works with very well and is super helpful and knowledgeable. She is a great asset to our team!

-Emily Pacella

Angela Melloni

Angela is a highly competent and motivated worker. She also never fails to help everyone in the team regardless of their role, and I truly appreciate working with her. I hope she gets recognized for all the hard work and dedication she's put in for the neuro team. -Pearlie ng

Erika Basilio

Hello! I am from La Paz, Bolivia. Allow me to nominate myself this time. As a Surgical Technologist, I feel honored by the work we perform all over the world. Even though our work is not always valued as it should be, we must be resilient and continue doing what we do. We are passionate. In Bolivia, despite the lack of surgical materials, we must find ways to solve any issues while maintaining sterility and order in the surgical field.



Mirna Valles Diaz

Mirna has always been a pleasure to work with. She is ready to jump into any cases she is assigned to, including emergency procedures performed at the bedside. Her expertise and experience are invaluable to our team, especially on night shifts where we have a limited set of skills. We are very lucky to have Mirna as part of our already awesome team! -Fran Krich

Curtis Hays

Curtis has a broad working knowledge of the job function of surgical tech here at Mayo. He is always prepared and makes sure that all possible needs of the case are met. He aspires to ensure that the physician has everything he needs to complete the case. He is excellent at anticipating needs during the case and knows what to do to make sure each patient gets the best care possible. He can perform as a second circulator if needed and is extremely helpful to the nursing staff in the room. He is one of the techs that others turn to when they have questions or need assistance. He is also relied upon to train new technologists often. He assists anyone where needed and is kind and compassionate to the patients. He goes out of his way to assist the new residents and medical students in learning their new roles in the operating room. -M Juilfs

Victor Sarmiento

I've been doing this job for 24 years, and I work in the CVOR. I still love it. Where else can you wear scrubs, listen to music, and provide care to a patient in the OR? Cardiac surgery helps me anticipate my surgeon's needs and perform procedures flawlessly from start to finish. I treat it like an art, striving to be smooth and letting nothing distract me.

Clare Klein

Clare is new to our department but always has an amazing attitude. She is funny, extremely hardworking, good at what she does, and super helpful to the RN and surgical team. We love having her. Go Clare! -Danni Augello

Erin Cooley

Always prepared, willing to go the extra mile to get the case done. Professional and pleasant, takes her role seriously. -Fadi Dahdaleh



Taurean Gavin

I am nominating Taurean for this Star because of his commitment to excellence. He can work in any service with proficiency, but his passion is Vascular. He believes continuity of care is what's best for the patient and never takes a break or lunch during the case, no matter how long it takes. Taurean has taken an active role in the education of Surgical Technology students, volunteering to be the point person at our facility for them during their clinical rotations. He encourages all CSTs and SSTs to become active in AST and participate in all the educational opportunities available to them. He developed the clinical ladder for Surgical Technologists at our facility and serves as a role model for both students and peers. As the lead Vascular Tech, he provides in-services to keep the staff updated on all the technological advances in that field. He sets the bar high! - Tammy Futrell



Veronica Heredia

"Roni" is a very skilled Surgical Tech. Not only is she highly skilled, but she is also willing to share her knowledge and experience with Inova's newly hired novice STs in our sim lab. She takes time out of her day to help transition our new STs into their professional roles. - Anne Sullivan

Shirley Richardson

Shirley is highly knowledgeable and has several years of experience as a surgical technologist. She is well respected on the unit by colleagues, surgeons, and others. For several years, she has assisted with precepting new hires and continues to help produce highly skilled, successful surgical technologists and nurses through her exemplary practice and incredible ability to create a healthy learning environment for her orientees. She is the epitome of excellence and professionalism. - Toyin Akinyemi



Bradly Duren

Bradly Duren is a highly dedicated and accomplished Co-Program Supervisor and Surgical Technology Instructor at Southern Technical College (STC) in Port Charlotte. With certifications as a Certified Surgical First Assistant (CSFA), Certified Surgical Assistant (CSA), and Certified Surgical Technologist (CST), he has played a pivotal role in shaping the future of aspiring surgical technologists.

Bradly's passion for education and the healthcare field led him to develop a YouTube channel, Surgical Technology STC, a platform dedicated to providing students with invaluable educational resources. This channel has become a crucial foundation for students' academic and practical learning, offering insights into surgical procedures, instrument handling, and study strategies to help them excel in their coursework and certification exams.

Under his leadership, Bradly has enhanced the academic experience at Southern Technical College and significantly expanded the externship program. He has established strong partnerships with clinical sites, ensuring students gain diverse, hands-on experience in real-world surgical environments. His efforts have enriched students' clinical training, giving them the confidence and competence to thrive in their future careers.

Bradly's contributions extend beyond the classroom, as he continuously seeks to elevate the quality of education and provide students with opportunities that bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice. His dedication to student success and innovation in surgical technology education has made him a respected leader and mentor within the STC community.

- Dr Nicholas Triana

Cheryl Orth

Cheryl has been a stalwart in the Florence surgery department. Her knowledge, expertise, and hard work have been a shining example for everyone around her. Thank you for all you do, Cheryl! - Logan Stemmer

Stacey Castro

Stacey Castro is one of the most technically skilled professionals and upholds the standards of sterile techniques and practices. She always stays on top of any new techniques and procedures, continually improving herself even after 24 years. Her willingness to learn and teach new techs is one of her best qualities. Any hospital or outpatient center would be proud to have her on their team. -Natasia Joines



Jordan Crawford

Even though she is a new grad and still a baby tech, Jordan has shown great promise and interest in this field. She is willing to learn anything, take on any challenge, and is ready to join any team at any time. Jordan puts her patients' safety as a top priority and never acts as though something is unimportant in her cases. She is a natural tech and will continue to make our community proud and safe each and every day! -Taylor Johnson

LaKeisha Pierre

I've been proficient in neurosurgery for over 10 years, and I love what I do. Working with new technology and learning new procedures makes me well-rounded and a great resource for others who are just learning. I need little to no help when doing neuro cases, as I feel comfortable and relaxed during them. I've been traveling for 6 years now, and all the hospitals I've worked at that perform these surgeries love having me because I know what I'm doing and I love the specialty.



Fanchon Moorer

She is an amazing tech, dedicated to her job and full of knowledge. A team player, she is always willing to help. I have the pleasure of working with her every day. -Maria Perez

Jamie Jordan

Jamie has been a part of our team for less than a year, and in that time, she has proven herself to be a valuable asset to our spine team. The surgeons and staff who work with her every day appreciate her technical proficiency in this challenging specialty. Jamie remains calm under pressure and provides excellent care to our patients! -Emily Mock

Carlton Prince

I am nominating my brother because of the exceptional work he has put in over 22 years as a surgical technologist at the same hospital. As a surgical technologist myself, I am very proud of him for following in my footsteps. He has shown great leadership in his position, is a great teacher to his colleagues, and has the ability to guide new residents with his expertise. Carlton is always willing to go above and beyond his duties and can perform all services without complaint. Over his 22 years of service, he has become a source of information for many of his colleagues. Some of the residents who operate with my brother know me, and the comments they make about him make me very proud to be his brother. He needs little to no supervision to perform his tasks—my brother is every surgeon's dream!

-Shereen Salmon

Shereen Salmon

I nominated myself because, after 27 years as a surgical technologist in the same hospital, I haven't lost interest in my job. I have been a cardiac technologist for over 20 years, and I have scored "Exceptional" on all my yearly evaluations. My performance far exceeds the requirements needed to fulfill the principal duties, responsibilities, goals, and expectations of the position, and I require limited or no supervision to get work done. I serve as a role model to junior staff and consider myself a master of cardiac surgery. I am knowledgeable and act as a mentor to my colleagues. I am always willing to learn new things and adapt easily. My passion for being a surgical technologist is still burning at the highest level.



Robert Rivera

Robert is an excellent worker. He has been a surgical technician for over 35 years and is really knowledgeable in surgeries and techniques. He gets along with all the surgeons, and because he knows so much, many of the doctors request him. He cares about each patient and works to make sure all patient care is of the utmost importance. He gets along well with the staff and is truly a team player. Robert Rivera is a star of excellence and an outstanding surgical technician.

-Karan Louise Rodrigues