



Dr. Elizabeth J. Kovacs received a BA in Biology from Reed College in 1978 and a PhD in Cell Biology from the University of Vermont in 1984. She was a postdoctoral trainee at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Biological Response Modifiers Program prior to joining the faculty in the Department of Cell Biology, Neurobiology and Anatomy at Loyola University Chicago in 1987. At Loyola, Dr. Kovacs moved through the ranks to full professor and joined the Department of Surgery as Vice-Chair of Research. She was the Director of the Alcohol Research Program and the Director of Research of the Burn and Shock Trauma Institute before relocating her laboratory to the University of Colorado Denver Anschutz Medical Campus in 2016. She is now Professor of Surgery, Director of Burn Research and Director of the Alcohol Research Program.

Dr. Kovacs was the recipient of the first Senior Scientist Award at Loyola University Medical Center and a fellow in the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program for Women, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA. She was President of the Society for Leukocyte Biology and served as the Chair of the Committee on Public Affairs for the American Association of Immunologists serving. She is currently President Elect of the Shock Society.

Research in the Kovacs laboratory centers on innate immunity and inflammation. Most recently, her laboratory has been studying tissue injury and repair in patients and in clinically relevant animal models. The focus has been on the role of leukocytes and inflammatory mediators in the blood and lungs of burn patients with inhalation injury, smokers, drinkers and lung transplant recipients. While the lungs remain Dr. Kovacs' favorite inflatable organ, her lab has also worked extensively on the skin, intestine and liver in models of injury. Much of this work includes "second hits," such as alcohol intoxication and infection, along with advanced age. Working on end-organ damage, the lab is establishing the role of the gut-liver axis in lung inflammation after remote injury.

To fund her research, Dr. Kovacs has received numerous grants from NIH, the Department of Defense, the Dr. Ralph and Marian C. Falk Medical Research Trust, Margaret A. Baima Endowment Fund for Alcohol Research and a series of Illinois Excellence in Academic Medicine Grants. She continues to serve on NIH and other grant review panels and is on several editorial boards. Her laboratory has published ~250 manuscripts and review articles and is internationally recognized for her work in both alcohol & immunity and aging & inflammation.

In spite of these feats, Dr. Kovacs believes that by far her greatest accomplishment is her daughter, Cathy Kelley, and after that being responsible for the training of more than 125 individuals ranging from high school students to visiting professors, and mentoring countless junior faculty across the country.