

Get to Know NYCPM's Faculty:

Jeffrey J. Cusack, DPM

Assistant Professor of Orthopedics and Pediatrics

Barbara Resseque, DPM

Professor of Orthopedics and Pediatrics



They met in NYCPM's Department of Orthopedics and Pediatrics and have lived and worked together ever since.

Doctors Jeffrey Cusack (1981) and Barbara Resseque (1980) met here as students, were both born on the same day in August, and have been married for 35 years. Dr. Cusack, born in New Jersey, earned a BS in Chemistry at the University of Miami, while Dr. Resseque, born in New York City, earned her BS in Biology at Fordham University.

When they graduated, residencies weren't mandatory, but each received post-graduate training in their eventual specialties. Dr. Resseque completed a podopediatrics fellowship here at NYCPM. Dr. Cusack, however, was faced with a challenge: how to further his desire to expand his interest in a biomechanical approach to treating patients in the face of not only a dearth of purely surgical residencies, but an absence of a structured orthopedic program as well. Enter Paul Jordan, DPM ('78), who was three years ahead of Dr. Cusack and already making his mark on his ability to assess and devise what came to be known in the rehabilitative world as 'tone-reducing' ankle foot orthoses used in the gait-training therapy provided by neuro-developmentally trained physical therapists.

Much of Dr. Jordan's orthopedic training came from his, and ultimately Drs. Cusack and Resseque's mentor, Richard O. Schuster, DPM ('37), who, during the running boom in the 70s, became the 'go-to' podiatrist at the office he maintained in his orthotic laboratory in College Point, Queens. It was through Drs. Jordan and Schuster that a program was created for Dr. Cusack in conjunction with United Cerebral Palsy of New York, enabling him to rotate through several centers. Dr. Cusack was able to evaluate and treat many of the same developmental syndromes he had only read about in a textbook. He was also given full access to Dr. Schuster's laboratory and used the opportunity there to fabricate all the orthoses that Dr. Resseque needed for the patients she was treating.

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During that period of time, which lasted just under two years, Dr. Schuster was transitioning into retirement, but did return to New York on a monthly basis, giving Dr. Cusack a unique opportunity to spend quality time with him, often over weekends.

Drs. Cusack and Resseque were literally on the cusp of signing a lease to set up their own practice when Dr. Jordan, who at the time was working at Langer Orthotic laboratory as a consultant, appeared with an eleventh-hour proposition: come and join the clinical staff out at Langer Laboratory and become part of a practice that would specialize in the evaluation and treatment of biomechanically dysfunctional patients, both pediatric as well as adult. It was there that a relationship began which, for Dr. Cusack, continues to this day.

"We went from one iconic figure (Schuster) in podiatric medicine to an entire group of them out at Langer," says Dr. Cusack. Sheldon Langer, DPM ('50), along with his co-founder, Justin Wernick, DPM ('59), who taught both Drs. Cusack and Resseque and whose course (Functional Orthopedics 2) is now taught by Dr. Cusack, along with Michael Polchaninoff, DPM ('77) ("who scratch-built the gait analysis system that ultimately became F-Scan") "were all into some really cool things regarding orthosis development and gait analysis, as well as how to bring the then-embryonic science of biomechanics to general podiatric physicians, many of whom did not have more than a token course in the science that was to explode years later," Dr. Cusack continued. "I watched Dr. Wernick and was amazed by his teaching techniques, many of which I employ to this day," he says. Dr. Langer's ability to take what was a complicated concept and write an article in his newsletter making it understandable to the mainstream was on display on a daily basis. In fact, Dr. Cusack feels his teaching ability is a direct reflection of that of Drs. Langer and Wernick, and enjoys passing that knowledge to his students here at NYCPM.

Dr. Resseque taught part-time at NYCPM from 1981-87, left to raise the couple's children, and returned to teaching in 1995. Dr. Cusack started teaching at NYCPM in 2009; he has worked at the Northport VA Hospital since 1990. The couple maintained a private practice in their home until retiring two years ago. Their practice focused entirely on biomechanics and orthotics; Dr. Resseque specialized in the treatment of children's feet, especially children with neuromuscular disorders.

Now, Dr. Cusack divides his time between lab work, the VA Hospital, and teaching; he sees patients in the Gait Lab in the Foot Center of New York. Dr. Resseque teaches here and sees pediatric patients.

Dr. Cusack is passionate about biomechanics; when he sees a foot problem – whether callus or bunion or something else – he thinks about what the cause could be from a biomechanical point of view. Why is the callus or bunion located where it is? The mechanics of the foot determine the location. Dr. Resseque is seeing juvenile diabetes and the epidemic of childhood obesity causing pain in the feet and hips of children usually seen in adults, noting that children's feet are more pliable, or moldable than adults' and therefore very susceptible to the stresses of obesity.

These two veteran podiatrists agree – they still love what they do after 35 years!