

# DR. LEW ZIRKLE TO KEYNOTE AT THE KICKOFF LUNCHEON

*Friday - 12:00 NOON in the Three Rivers Convention Center*



He started SIGN (Surgical Implant Generation Network) to support orthopedic surgeries and help trauma patients in developing countries. SIGN was founded in 1999 (funded in part by the \$10,000 Dr. Zirkle received from the Kiwanis International Foundation as part of his Kiwanis World Service Medal recognition). SIGN has developed new surgical technology, manufactures appropriately sized implants, trains surgeons and donates the products. Since SIGN was founded in 1999, there are more than 500 SIGN-trained surgeons in nearly 100 trauma hospitals using the technology in developing countries.

Dr. Zirkle, when he was a young surgeon in a MASH unit in Vietnam in the 1960s, saw an enormous need for modern surgical treatment. After nearly 30 years of semi-annual trips to teach modern surgical techniques to surgeons in Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Latin America brought disappointing results because the newly-trained surgeons quickly exhausted the supplies of surgical implants Dr. Zirkle was able to persuade American manufacturers to donate, he realized that progress would be limited until a way was found to provide the implants as well as the training.

This was all accomplished through a company Dr. Zirkle named the Surgical Implant Generation Network (SIGN). Design Engineers and a Production and Support Staff were assembled and an ingenious alignment device was developed that permitted surgeons to "hit the slot" nearly every time, even without imaging equipment in the operating room.

Explaining briefly, a victim's shattered bone fragments are held in proper position while they heal by a surgically implanted stainless steel "nail" installed in the bone canal. The "nail" and bone fragments are held rigidly together by screws that pass through the bone and through slots in the "nail." Surgeons can't see the slots without imaging equipment so SIGN engineers developed an apparatus (a kind of jig) that reliably aims the screws through the bone and the slot in the nail and into the bone on the other side of the canal.

Instead of being in traction for life, lucky victims are able to take a few tentative steps the next day and are walking on healed legs only a few weeks after SIGN surgery. The victim's family has a healthy parent and wage-earner returned to it instead of a life-long invalid to care for.

Learn more about SIGN at: [www.sign-post.org](http://www.sign-post.org)

