

# Industry Transformer

## Dr. Jon Garito

At the age of 23, Industry Transformer Jon Garito, Ph.D., took over the family business. At that time, there was one product and eight employees. Over the course of 37 years, Dr. Garito transformed the Radiofrequency device and developed it into over 100 innovative surgical patents that would be used by physicians in 12 different medical specialties, and achieving worldwide sales in 70 countries, including the USA. By understanding and listening to the needs of the doctor, Dr. Garito not only transformed a small, family owned business into a multi-million dollar corporation, but also helped thousands of doctors improve their surgical outcomes by introducing them to the precise and bloodless field of radiosurgery. In 2008 Dr. Garito sold the company he transformed, Ellman International. He is now the founder and CEO of Life Sciences Technology, a company that helps doctors turn their ideas into innovative, marketable and patentable products. Dr. Garito shares with BIG Medicine Magazine™ his trials and tribulations in the highly competitive field of medical device development.





Dr. Peter Raus, Oculoplastic Surgeon Brussels, Belgium and Dr. Jon Garito

## THE EARLY DAYS

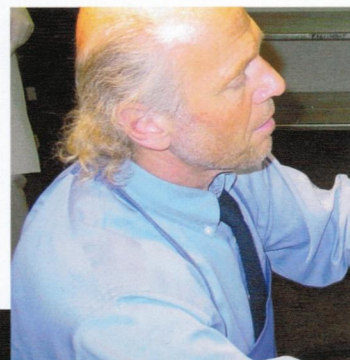
Dr. Garito began working at Ellman Dental Mfg. a Dental device company specializing in Radio Frequency (RF) technology in 1973 when he was in college. It was a small company owned by his father-in-law, Dr. Irving Ellman, and his wife Shirley Ellman. Dr. Ellman was a dentist (and an electrical engineer.) In 1974 Garito started law school, but found that he loved working at Ellman Dental Mfg., and continued to work there juggling law school and work. During the course of the next year Dr. Irving Ellman was diagnosed with cancer and consequently died. The family was devastated and, not knowing what to do with the company, thought first to sell it. Garito quickly stepped in and bravely told his family: "I can run the business," he recalls. "I really believed that I could. I especially enjoyed the interaction with the Dentists." At first it was overwhelming trying to manage the business and attend law school, so Garito decided to take a leave of absence from law school (although he did ultimately get a Ph.D. in Business in 1981) to devote all of his time to the company. Dr. Ellman's youngest son Alan also joined the business. In the early days, the company was primarily in the dental field, but Garito was eager to transfer the RF technology and, while helping a friend and veterinary surgeon, he realized that he could make minor adjustments to Ellman's signature Dental radiofrequency device, the Dento-Surg, to help veterinary surgeons perform faster bloodless surgery on small animals. "It came easily to me. I worked closely with electronic engineers to increase the wattage to support small animal surgeries," said Garito. "The higher powered RF device was named Surgitron." From there, the medical world was his oyster. Next it was dermatology. At a medical conference, Garito became friends with Dr. Sheldon Pollack a leading dermatologist who was Head of the Dermatology Clinic at Duke University. Garito and Pollack began research together realizing that the Surgitron was not only a novel device, but one that was highly effective at removing skin lesions, lessen pain, reduce healing time, and decrease scarring. "Dr. Pollack had a tremendous amount of experience and credibility and was a very highly respected dermatologist," stated Garito. "He was amazed by what the (RF) radiofrequency technology could do." Dr. Pollack expanded the Dermatologic range of surgical procedures for the RF Surgitron while Garito developed RF accessories to support these new soft tissue applications.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING THE TEAM

Training on the use of the RF technology was already provided to dental surgeons at Universities and Dental Congresses. When Dr. Pollack said that he was interested in further training on the device the only option was to send him to a dental course. "At first I was somewhat embarrassed by the situation. Here we were with one of the most revered dermatologists in the country and without any peer training to support him," recalls Garito. "As it turned out, it was a blessing in disguise. Dr. Pollack took Dr. Jeffrey Sherman's dental course at the University of Connecticut and then became a lead trainer and developer of his own courses for the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD.) It was a win, win situation." Garito quickly realized that he had a tiger by the tail and within a few short months began expanding the medical reach and capabilities of the Surgitron radiofrequency device, and developed training courses for the many doctors who saw the potential in these technologies. These lectures took off and so did the use of the radiofrequency unit. This was the tip of the iceberg. Training of the team was on the move.

## CREATING INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

Garito went on to develop strong relationships with high level luminaries in all surgical specialties. These relationships produced scores of new surgical procedures and numerous novel RF accessories for all kinds of soft tissue uses – eyelid lesions, rhinophyma, dermatology, ob/gyn procedures. He began driving the business from one medical specialty to the next transferring the RF technology and found that the company was highly successful in each and every specialty. The welcome reception from doctors was exciting. "Doctors would have different requirements," said Garito. "Gynecologic surgeons were using a scalpel and scissors to trim labia and when one doctor asked if I could help him do this without excessive bleeding, I was able to shape the tip and diameter of the RF electrode to achieve what the doctor wanted." The same held true in blepharoplasty when doctors were asking if he could help them make an incision in the eyelid and melt excess fatty tissue, thereby creating a new bloodless field for surgery, he was quick to adapt his technology for this purpose. Many doctors went from scalpel to laser, and then to radiofrequency. He quickly realized that he could create an RF electrode for almost any soft tissue or endoscopic surgical application. Doctors were drawn to Garito's creative thinking, enthusiasm, energy and personality, including Dr. Constantin Stan an internationally renowned breast surgeon who practices in Romania. Dr. Stan's close relationship with Garito contributed to the development of improved approaches to breast surgery with innovative customized RF tools. To protect this valuable asset, Garito set about getting patents on his inventions. Many noted multi-specialty surgeons published clinical articles in leading medical journals and textbooks on the RF Surgical device and its RF accessories. Over the course of his career Garito was granted over 100 patents on his inventions and, rumor has it, he's not finished yet.

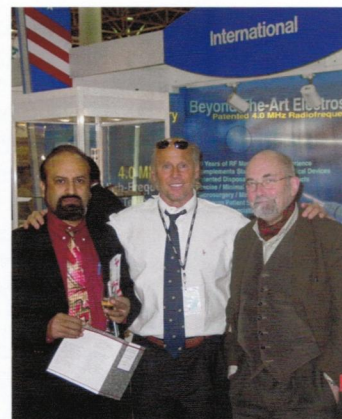


*Note: Alan Ellman, a former executive and co-owner of Ellman International is listed as co-inventor on many of the patents referenced in this article.*



## FUN AND GAMES WITH THE FDA

In the USA, the official stamp of approval on any medical device is an FDA clearance. However, it's very difficult in the USA to bring a product to market. Dealing with the FDA is difficult, costly and time consuming. Many large medical device companies in Europe and Latin America don't even try to sell their products in the USA because of their lack of knowledge, or willingness to work with the complex FDA process. Garito learned firsthand the importance and the idiosyncrasies of dealing with the FDA. "First, you have to realize that when dealing with the FDA you are generally not involved with doctors, but rather engineers who have a completely different thought process and perspective," said Garito. "It's problematic and at times frustrating but you have to go through the regulatory system. While it might be construed that the FDA is inhibiting growth in new product development in the USA, for those that stick with the process and gain FDA clearance, the sky's the limit." Garito says he has a high level group of FDA and International regulatory experts now on board to help other inventors bring their medical product to market.



Dr. Deshpande and Dr. Vogt of Rome, Italy with Dr. Jon Garito

## HERE COME THE BIG BOYS

Every entrepreneur and innovator dreams of the day when the big leader in the industry wants to buy their company. For Dr. Jon Garito that day came too soon. "Looking back people must have thought I was 'insane' when I turned down the first offer to purchase Ellman by a giant surgical company," said Garito. "Here I was in my early 40's when the President of this huge company approached me wanting to make a purchase. I was flattered, but I was not interested," said Garito. He knew it wasn't the money he was interested in, Ellman was already a success and he was making money, it was the challenge to continue growing and the camaraderie he had developed within the medical community. He was having too much fun. He was more passionate about helping doctors better serve their patients than he was in selling the company. The time wasn't right. He continued developing new technology, creating more patents and penetrating more areas of medicine. He introduced the biggest advance in RF surgery the 4 MHz Dual Frequency device. This new RF device was highly acclaimed and received both FDA clearance and a patent. There was still a lot of uncharted medical territory for him to explore, and thousands of doctors yet to convert to the superior and practical use of RF technology. At this time Garito started a second company Ellman Innovations (now Elliquence) with his partner, and they then entered the Spine and Neurosurgery fields.

## TAKING THE WORLD MEDIA STAGE

"When Dr. Luis Rubio of Lima, Peru brought his patient Milagros Cerron to the Ellman offices in New York there wasn't a dry eye in the room, including my own," Garito reminisced. Young Milagro suffered "mermaid syndrome" or sirenomelia, a condition wherein the girl's legs were joined, a condition which usually kills sufferers within days of birth. Dr. Rubio, with Garito's guidance, had used the patented Radiowave 4 megahertz device to successfully separate the legs of this one year old girl. They had been invited by Oprah Winfrey to appear on her TV show and, after meeting with Oprah, Dr. Rubio insisted on bringing Milagro and her family from Chicago to Garito's company in New York. Dr. Rubio had a special message for all of the staff at Ellman. He wanted each of them to know how important all of their jobs were, that without each and every one of them, this young girl might not have ever walked. One year later, a similar story broke the news. The first ever co-joined twins were separated without any neurological damage which the surgeon, Dr. James Goodrich, attributed to technology developed by Garito. All the eyes of the world watched this story. It was reported worldwide, from the BBC to the New York Times. When the CEO of Montifiore Hospital invited Garito to a black tie fund raising event, Dr. Goodrich talked to the entire attendees of the gala about the gravity of the surgery on the twins and the total success of the procedure. Then, unexpectedly, Garito was asked to stand up. In front of the entire group, and along with the president of Medtronic, Dr. Goodrich thanked the two of them for their critical roles in making this surgery such a huge success. Garito was shocked. "I was totally surprised to be included in this way. This was a critical turning point in my career."

## SELLING THE COMPANY

After 38 years Garito had travelled all over the world and the business became substantially bigger. He and his partner had expanded to over 125 employees, with over 100 medical patents under their belt, and operating in 70 countries. He hit a wall. "I realized I needed to start doing things for myself. Half my life had been dedicated to the business and it was time for a change," explained Garito. "The internal management of the business and its structure was becoming overwhelming and I was spending so much time dealing with the internal stress of running such a large organization that I was no longer creating." He knew this was the right time to sell, the right time to step back and let others take Ellman to the next level. As fate would have it, an offer came to the table and it was a good offer so he sold the company. Garito also sold his ownership in Ellman Innovations (now Elliquence). It was a good move. Many of the key players whom he mentored and worked alongside stayed with the two companies, as did his daughter who was one of Ellman's best sales people.



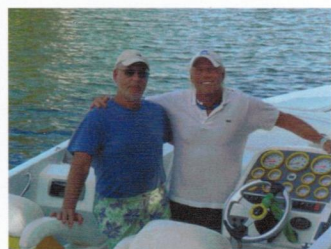
Dr. Jon Garito demonstrating RF Technology at a St. Louis University Cadaver Workshop

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## WHAT'S NEXT for Dr. Jon Garito?

If you go on line and do a google search for blepharoplasty radiofrequency dozens of sites are speaking about it. The same applies to non ablative skin tightening, breast augmentation radiofrequency and on and on. Many of the doctors behind these sites are working with technology that Garito developed, a testimony that his inventions now have a life of their own. Garito's love of competition and adventure is not only dedicated to his professional life, but also his personal life. Among his many pursuits; surfing, basketball, tennis, cycling, snow skiing, water skiing, Harley Davidson road trips, racing high performance cars and boats, and flying Ultra Light planes, Garito can still be found working with other doctors on new advanced technologies and products. As founder and CEO of Life Science Technologies, a company that helps doctors develop their own inventions into patented, marketable products, he also assists corporate medical executives with strategic management initiatives and expanding their IP (intellectual property) portfolios. He maintains residences and offices in New York and Florida and is surrounded by his family, including his wife of 37 years, three daughters, three sons in law and seven grandchildren. "My mind is still moving at 90 miles an hour and my relationships with doctors have expanded," Garito said gleefully. "I have a tremendous amount of energy and I am as passionate and excited today about developing new medical technology as I was when I was 23!"



Joseph Rubenstein and Dr. Jon Garito,  
Ocean Reef, Florida



Dr. Jon Garito winning tennis championship  
at Biscayne Tennis Club, Florida



Dr. Jon Garito cycling Southampton, L.I.,  
New York

### About Dr. Jon Garito

Dr. Jon Garito developed over 100 medical patents. He grew sales in over 70 countries worldwide and developed medical technology in over twelve different specialties including:

- Dental
- Ob/Gyn
- Dermatology
- Ocular and Ophthalmic Surgery
- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- Cosmetic Surgery
- Podiatry
- Family practice
- Internal Medicine
- Otolaryngology
- General Surgery
- Spinal Surgery
- Oral Maxillofacial Surgery
- Neurosurgery



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