

OBITUARY OF DR. MANUEL M. ALBUM: 1919–2008



Dr. Manuel Moses Album was a paediatric dentist 'sans pareil' who, for nearly half a century, was recognized nationally and internationally as a compassionate and innovative Paediatric Dentist and teacher.

He attended Temple University in Philadelphia and earned his dental degree from Temple Dental School in 1943, went on to serve with the Army Air Force 238 Medical Dispensary Aviation attached to the 7th Bomb Group, in the China-Burma-India Theater in World War II. In 1946, he opened a practice in city Philadelphia for a short period of time prior to moving the practice to Abington. In addition, for four decades, he taught residents at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). After he retired, Dr. Album enjoyed travelling and golf, but continued to give clinics for children with Cerebral Palsy and to lecture to the dental residents at Abington Hospital and to the students at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine.

A world authority on the dental treatment and care of the special patient with disabilities, Dr. Album published more than 100 articles and developed practice techniques that inspired hundreds of residents in the Dental Department at CHOP, many of whom convene annually to honor Dr. Album after he retired, and formed what is now affectionately known as 'The Album Society'. As President of the American Society of Dentistry for Children in 1968, Dr. Album established an international scholarship for a non-U.S. citizen to go to the United States to study Paediatric Dentistry at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In addition, Dr. Album served as Clinical Professor of Paediatric Dentistry at the School of Dental Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, and served simultaneously on the staff of Abington Hospital, from 1953.

His interest in the disabled patient led him to be the founder and first president of the American Academy of Dentistry for Persons with Disabilities in 1952. He was also instrumental in founding the International Association of Dentistry for the Handicapped and served as its president from 1976–1978. He established the first postgraduate programme in the country for dental care for the patients with disabilities at the University of Pennsylvania in 1952. The first dental clinic in the country to teach and train dental students to treat patients with disabilities was also established at Penn.

Upon his retirement from private practice, he was given a special day by his former dental residents at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and his many friends, at which time he received a citation from the City of Philadelphia by Mayor Ed Rendell, who praised Dr. Album for his pioneering programmes throughout the world in providing dental care for children with special needs.

Dr. Album was an Honorary Member of the International Association for Paediatric Dentistry (IAPD). He served as its first Editor and then President between 1979 and 1981. He was honoured by numerous national and international organizations but the final accolade of his lifetime of service to children was the honour bestowed on him by the IAPD at the 17th Congress in London. In September 1999 he was awarded the organization's first President's Medal that was presented to Dr. Album by her Royal Highness, the Princess Anne at the opening ceremony of the meeting.

While it was difficult to tabulate Manuel Album's many attributes and the long lasting effect of his life upon those who come after him, it is impossible to give justice to Manny the man. He was a kind and patient teacher who loved his students, a modest man who would have denied the depth of his influence on the delivery of care for all children and a true, generous, loyal friend. Manny will be sorely missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.

Dr. Album is survived by his wife Shirley Evelyn Israel whom he married in 1951, his son Michael, daughter Fredlyn, their spouses and his 4 grandchildren.

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