

## Remarks on Receiving the Special Merit Award

**Hermine McLeran, BS, MPH**

It is indeed a great honor to receive this award and one that I will always treasure with fond memories of the many outstanding individuals I have worked with over the years. This is truly a humbling experience and when Rhys asked me to say a few words, it caused me to reflect on all the opportunities that I have had and the people who made them possible. No one ever accomplishes anything alone. Along the way I had the support and encouragement of many people, starting with my parents, who placed a very high priority on education and would be bursting with pride if they could be here today.

I believe my interest in public health began at about the age of four as a patient in the new Kellogg Children's Clinic at the University of Michigan. As a patient in the clinic, I presented a challenge to a dental student and ended up in a small room with Dr. Kenneth A. Easlick. There began a life-long friendship with a wonderful mentor. My sister and I were also subjects in Dr. Philip Jay's early lactobacillus studies. Years later I was fortunate to learn from these two outstanding teachers as a student in dental hygiene and public health.

My real interest in public health began in the summer of my junior year in dental hygiene when I participated in the topical fluoride programs in Michigan. The thought that some of the pain and suffering I experienced as a child could be prevented was a strong motivating factor for me to pursue a career in public health. I later worked for the Michigan Department of Health organizing fluoride programs in over 200 communities each summer. During that time I attended graduate school, where I was fortunate to take courses with the public health dentists from Dr. Easlick during his last year of full-time teaching. After completing my MPH I continued with the Michigan Department of Health. Some of my most memorable experiences included participating in a state-wide survey of dental needs of nursing



*Hermine McLeran*

home residents, working on fluoridation campaigns, and assisting Dr. Al Russell on the fluoridation survey in Grand Rapids.

After moving to California I worked for the Alameda County Health Department and spent 11 months on the first fluoridation campaign in the East Bay. During that time I was very active in the Dental Hygiene Association. It was a time of many challenges, such as expanded functions and representation on state licensure boards.

In about 1973, Dr. Robert Mecklenburg, then chief dental officer of the US Public Health Service, assembled a group of 24 dental hygienists as consultants to the Indian Health Service. He arranged for our training sessions to occur in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association of Public Health Dentists, as this organization was known at that time. We were permitted to attend meetings as associate nonvoting members. It was during this time that Alice Horowitz wrote an editorial about the need to extend voting privileges to dental hygienists. Dr. Mecklenburg also believed that dental hygienists should be full voting members of this association and proposed a resolution to that effect. That resolution was adopted exactly 20 years ago today

and the rest is history.

I believe I have attended every meeting since that time and in 1985 I received a call from someone with a very strange accent asking if I would consider a nomination for Executive Council. Myron Allukian was very convincing and there began an association with many wonderful and outstanding people. The thing that stands out as I reflect on members of this association is the dedication and unselfish nature of public health dentists and dental hygienists. No one ever said no when asked to help and I thank all who worked so hard when I was president. My husband, Jim, has expressed it best—the specialty of public health dentistry is the true conscience of the profession.

I would be remiss if I did not mention a few individuals who supported and encouraged me during my years in AAPHD, namely:

- The past-presidents of AAPHD who challenged me and provided leadership and support during my years as an officer of this association.
- Steve Corbin and Bob Mecklenburg, whose vision, support, and encouragement brought the "Future of Dental Public Health" report to fruition and has served as a guide to activities today.
- Rhys Jones, who chaired the committee for the "Future of Dental Public Health" report.
- Marty Liggett, who encouraged me to do things I never thought possible. What a mentor she was to all of us who were involved with the Coalition on Oral Health. Her leadership and dedication to the mission of oral health for all was unequalled.
- The officers, members of the Executive Council, and editors who contribute so many hours to make this such an outstanding association.
- Finally, Helen and Joe Doherty, who make everything happen.

Thank you all.

On a more personal note, I must thank my colleagues at Iowa, who were always there to help and advise

me; my secretary Jean Frazer, who contributed many hours to the efforts of this association; Rhys Jones, who succeeded me as president and was untiring in his efforts to chair commit-

tees, fund raise, and recruit new members; and David Striffler and Brian Burt, who sent notes of encouragement at just the right times.

In conclusion, I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who

made this award possible, with a special thank you to my family—my husband and our three sons, who supported me all the way. Thank you, Jim, for all your help and wise counsel.

## 1996 Distinguished Service Award: John C. Greene, DMD, MPH

**Presented by Rhys Jones, DDS, MS, Immediate Past-president**

The AAPHD Distinguished Service Award is presented to an individual for excellence and distinguished service to public health dentistry and is awarded this year to Dr. John Greene. Unfortunately, John is unable to join us today. Just a week ago, he called to report he was going in the next day for emergency back surgery for a disk problem. He has been having problems lately, but a numbing of the leg prompted the emergency surgery. After three days in the hospital, John reports he is doing well and relayed his disappointment that he could not make the trip, as he was really looking forward to seeing old friends. In consultation with John and the AAPHD Executive Council, we have decided to present the award to John personally next year at the 60th Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

Dr. John Greene is currently professor and dean emeritus at the University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry. He received his dental degree from the University of Louisville and his public health degree from the University of California at Berkeley. He holds honorary doctor of science degrees from three universities: Boston University, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Louisville. Other honors include the Meritorious Service Award and Distinguished Service Medal from the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the *Fédération Dentaire Internationale* Award of Merit; the Outstanding Professional Award from the Pierre Fauchard Academy; and *Alumnus of the Year* at both the University of Louisville and the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health. He is also an elected member

of the Institute of Medicine.

Dr. Greene had a distinguished career in the US Public Health Service that spanned three decades. During that time he served in many capacities, including: assignment to the World Health Organization as special consultant to India, as a fellow in the Epidemic Intelligence Service, and as an investigator in the Epidemiology and Biometry Branch of NIDR. From 1961 to 1966 he served as chief of the Epidemiology Program in San Francisco and served as the director of the Division of Dental Health from 1968 to 1973. Dr. Greene became the chief dental officer of the US Public Health Service in 1973 and continued to serve in that capacity after being appointed the deputy surgeon general of the Public Health Service in 1978. He continued in both of those roles until he retired from the Public Health Service in 1981.

He did not waste any time in his retirement. He accepted the position of dean of the School of Dentistry at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) in 1981. As dean, he served as president of both the American and International Associations for Dental Research. He is former chair of the Administrative Board of the Council of Deans of the American Association of Dental Schools.

He "retired" again in 1994. John has continued to serve dental public health in his "second retirement." He is currently serving as cochair of the UCSF Chancellor's Task Force on the Impact of Health Care Reform on the Academic Health Center. He is AADR's representative on the National Cancer Institute's National Dental Tobacco-free Steering Committee. He is a member of the advisory com-

mittee for the Pew grant program called Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation. He also is serving on the NIH Advisory Committee on Research on Women's Health and is continuing his work on the use of smokeless tobacco in addition to a variety of other volunteer activities at UCSF.

He continues to serve AAPHD. Last year, as AAPHD president, I asked John to chair the AAPHD Select Committee on the Response to the IOM Committee Report on the Future of Dental Education. The Select Committee under John's leadership produced a thorough report with recommendations on how the dental public health community can bring expertise and resources to bear on the realization of many of the dental education recommendations in the IOM report.

The final line in the summary statement of the AAPHD Select Committee Report reads, "The committee believes that dental public health has a unique opportunity to reach out and join with others who have similar interests and to use our special expertise and experience to improve and protect the oral and general health of the American people." Those were John's words as committee chair—words he has lived by in his distinguished career in dental public health and education. John also has had an opportunity to reach out and join with others who have similar interests and has used his special expertise and experience to improve and protect the oral and general health of the American people. He has taken full advantage of that opportunity. We are pleased to honor him with our AAPHD Distinguished Service Award.