

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

The John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award in Dental Public Health—1998 Recipient Myron Allukian, Jr.

Clare Shaffer, Chair, Oral Health Section, Awards Committee

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 17th Annual John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award Ceremony of the Oral Health Section of the American Public Health Association. My name is Clare Shaffer and I have the honor of serving as the chair of the 1998 Oral Health Section's Awards Committee. This award is given by the membership of the Oral Health Section to honor an individual who has made outstanding contributions to improve oral health in

the United States. The recipient must demonstrate sustained and distinguished accomplishments in the field of public health.

I would like to take a moment to thank all those who have helped in organizing this evening's event; but, in particular, I would like to recognize and thank those members of the section who served on the Awards Committee: Dr. Ardell Wilson, Ms. Karen Kopriva, Dr. Herschel Horowitz, and Dr. John Greene, the 1997 recipient of the John W. Knutson Award. I would also like to thank Dr. Martha Fales,

who arranged to have the silver tray engraved.

In the fall of 1997 a call for nominations was submitted to the membership and also published in several professional journals. In May of this year the committee met to review the excellent nominations, select an awardee and inform the section leadership of its selection.

I now would like to introduce the Chair of the Oral Health Section, Ms. Sue Sanzi-Schaedel, who will make the formal announcement.

Sue Sanzi-Schaedel, Chair, Oral Health Section, American Public Health Association

Before introducing our distinguished awardee this evening, I would like to recognize Steven Knight, of DNTLworks, for his generous support for the hors d'oeuvres this evening. On behalf of the Oral Health Section and the Awards Committee, thank you. We would also like to thank Colgate Palmolive, Oral Health Products, for their continued and generous support of the award and, finally, I would like to thank the Awards Committee for their diligent and considerable efforts during the year.

Presenting the John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award in Dental Public Health is one of the true joys and honors of the chair of the Oral Health Section. As a dental public health hygienist in Boston during the early 1970s, there was no mistaking the energy and creativity generated in dental public health by our awardee. The introductions of our awardee will be made this evening by a distinguished panel of public health and dental public health professionals, who themselves could be the "Who's Who" of dental public health. Before they begin, it is with great privilege that I present to you the 1998 Awardee

of the John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award in Dental Public Health, Dr. Myron Allukian, Jr.

Two individuals that could not be with us this evening sent letters of recognition that read as follows:

Dear Dr. Allukian:

Congratulations on receiving



Dr. Allukian is presented the award by Sue Sanzi-Schaedel, chair, Oral Health Section

this year's John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award. It is well known at the Boston Public Health Commission, where you serve as director of the Bureau of Community Dental Programs, that you are dedicated and effective in promoting oral health in Boston. As mayor of Boston, I am proud that your efforts are being recognized on a national level.

Thank you for all the good work that you are doing in Boston. It is quite an honor for you, and for your city, to be recognized by an organization like the American Public Health Association. Again, congratulations!

Sincerely,
Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston

Dear Dr. Allukian:

It is with pleasure that I extend to you my most sincere congratulations as you are honored with the John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award.

As President Kennedy often

said, "One person can make a difference," and the celebration in your honor is a fitting tribute to the significant difference both of you have made in improving the lives of so many people and in

working so tirelessly in the field of oral health care in the United States. I know that there are many people who are grateful for the dedication you have shown. I share the respect and admiration of all your friends and family in

this tribute and I hope the future will bring you continued success. With my best wishes,

Sincerely,
Edward M. Kennedy
US Senator

A Tribute to Myron Allukian, Jr., DDS, MPH

Barry S. Levy, MD, MPH, Immediate Past President, American Public Health Association

Dr. Myron Allukian, Jr., we honor you here
For your distinguished service and extraordinary career.
A national leader, you've been instrumental
In demonstrating that just about all public health is dental.

For neither personal advancement nor personal wealth
You've contributed enormously to oral health.
In Greater Boston and throughout the nation
You've been a leading champion for fluoridation.
If it weren't for you and the roles that you play,
Our nation would be in a state of decay.

With innovative programs, you did succeed
In bringing dental health programs to many in need:
To those who are impoverished and those with HIV,
To the homeless, the elderly, to Vietnam refugees.

Myron, you've worked professionally in many sectors,
You've been Boston's long-time Community Dental
Programs Director,
You've taught many students about public health principles
and oral health tools
In your faculty roles at three public health, one dental
hygiene, and three dental medicine schools.

In APHA, you've shown your leadership skill;
There's no major role here that you did not fill.
Your crowning achievement was eight years ago,
When you served as APHA president—far and wide you did
go,
Giving untiringly of all of yourself,
Spreading the message of public health.

John Knutson was the first dentist to serve as APHA pres.
But he ran unchallenged—at least that's what Myron says.
Myron, you ran your campaign, you struck all the right notes,
You shook all the hands...and even counted the votes.
You spoke in many states the country through,
And you sometimes brought your kids along with you.
You returned to Vietnam in this APHA role,
And carried a message from your heart and your soul
Of partnership to move beyond yesterday's sorrow
To a healthier, more peaceful world of tomorrow.

And in APHA, after your roles had been served,
You passed on the challenge and gave others of us the nerve.
Among the Association's officers, when we talk, one on one,
We discover that it was Myron who made all of us run.

Over the years, Myron, you've been a teacher and mentor
To many students and colleagues from many departments
and centers;
And to me, you have been a trusted adviser,
Perhaps not much older, but substantially wiser.

In so many other ways, you've been effective:
In incorporating dental health into the nation's prevention
objectives,
In writing over 100 publications
On all subjects from fluoridation to fluoridation.

There's some more information that is consequential
That I'll share if you keep it quite confidential:
It's descriptive data shrouded in much mystery,
It's best referred to as "Myron's Oral History."

Myron was born on Armenian Christmas and in the 50+
years since,
His mother continues to believe he's a prince.
Myron has remembered his roots—or so he's behaved;
Even his deciduous teeth have been saved.

In his family, Myron has taken much pride:
For 23 years, Ruth's been his bride,
And it's true that her wedding ring Myron did fuse
From golden teeth that his father could no longer use.
Myron and Ruth's six children, now aged 12 to 21,
Have shared lots of love, affection, and sheer fun.
Myron III, Kristin, Alison, Jason, Alexandra, and Nathan's
their crew.
Myron, we've heard none of them can outrun or outwrestle
you.
Family outings are not picnics—they're collections of samples
In order to determine if the fluoride levels in water are
ample.