

1999 International Special Merit Award for Community Dentistry: Mario M. Chaves, DDS, MPH

Presented by B. Alex White, DDS, DrPH

International members are important to our association's future and to continued improvement in the health and oral health of the public. To recognize the valuable contributions of our international colleagues, AAPHD established the International Special Merit Award for Community Dentistry. It is indeed an honor to present this year's award to Dr. Mario Chaves.

Dr. Chaves is senior consultant to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He had hoped to be with us today, but unfortunately he could not. He did provide me with some information and comments that I would like to share on his behalf:

I am deeply honored with the award, especially coming from the AAPHD, an association to which I have proudly belonged for many years, almost from the beginning of my international health career.

I wish particularly to thank you and the members of the Awards and Nominations Committee for selecting my name for this year's honor. I am at that stage in life when an honor like this comes as a very pleasant surprise, for I had a growing feeling of having vanished from the international scene. It brings back a mix of emotions, good memories from my early days in dental public health, and sorrow when thinking of the many friends who are no longer with us and with whom I learned so much.

Dr. Chaves also provided some reflections about his higher education, professional life, and publications.

About his education, Dr. Chaves says:

When I went to the United States for the first time in 1950, I had already completed my dental and medical studies in Brazil, and was beginning my academic career in Rio de Janeiro. My studies in the



Mario Chaves

United States included one year of postgraduate studies in pharmacology—from 1950–51—at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and one year at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (from 1954–55), for my master of public health degree. The dental health component was oriented by Professor Ken Easlick, who had a good number of Latin American dentists from various countries under his guidance. My studies were sponsored in both cases by the Kellogg Foundation. My mentor, a person whom I greatly admired, and with whom I was fortunate to keep in touch frequently until his death, was Phil Blackerby. I believe Latin American dentistry owes a great deal to Phil's influence, vision, and support.

Dr. Chaves says this about his professional life:

Upon return[ing] to Brazil in 1951, I started teaching pharmacology at the dental and medical schools at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Phil Blackerby, at the time Program Director for the Kellogg Foundation, visited former fel-

lows of the foundation early in 1952. The foundation had a policy of giving support to return fellows to their countries of origin. This included my obtaining funds for a dental pharmacology laboratory in our dental school.

Blackerby's visit to Rio had another unexpected influence in my life. He introduced me to John Frankel, a graduate of the dental school in Illinois and a staff member of the US Public Health Service. John had recently arrived in Brazil to act in a bilateral health program, the SESP, part of the Point Four program of President Truman, and was searching for a counterpart. Phil suggested my name, I accepted the challenge, and my professional life took an entirely different direction. I changed from a quiet basic science career to a dental public health career, and never regretted it. Thus, on April 7, 1952, by coincidence the World Health Day, I moved into the world of public health.

John Frankel and I worked together for two years and became close friends. John introduced me to the DMF index, which we translated into CPO, and this was the start of dental epidemiology in Brazil. We began in SESP the first water fluoridation project in Brazil, one of the first three in Latin America. Other beginnings were projects on topical application of fluorides using auxiliary personnel and Knutson's four-chair method in an incremental dental care program for schoolchildren.

By May 1954, there was another turning point in my life. The Kellogg Foundation approved a grant to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to create a position for a dental health officer in

Washington, with one secretary, and the necessary funds for travel support. Again my name was suggested and again I accepted the challenge. By September 1954, I moved with my family to the United States, spent one school year in Ann Arbor, and with my brand new MPH degree in hand, moved to Washington, DC, in July 1955.

I worked for PAHO until July 1963, and during those eight years, I traveled to all the countries in Latin America and to four countries in the English-speaking Caribbean. It was a wonderful experience. I began by visiting John Knutson at PHS and also Dr. Arnold at the NIDR. Gradually, I came to know a good number of the outstanding people in dental public health at the time. Don Galagan, Tom Hagan, Jack Pelton, John Fulton, John Green, Viron Diefenbach, and Al Russell, to name only a few.

Among the initiatives PAHO started in Latin America, I should mention the beginning of the first dental public health education program in Latin America, at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, the first Department of Social Dentistry in Latin America in Medellín, Columbia, the stimulus and support for the creation of a Latin American Association of Dental Schools (ALAFOD), the organization of three regional seminars on dental education held in Bogotá, Columbia, Mexico City, and Petrópolis, Brazil. I organized only the first one, in which Bill

Mann gave a course on dental education and John Ingle served as a PAHO consultant. The seminar coincided with the Cuban missile crisis and we were very concerned with the confrontation which might occur as Russian ships were approaching Cuba. Fortunately, reason prevailed, and we returned safely home.

I think that my eight years with PAHO provided a good base to my public health career. During this period I was elected an honorary member of the AAPHD, an honor I always cherished. Also during this period, I had close contact with the ADA, and served as a member of its Council on International Relations.

By July of 1963, I moved with my family to Geneva to take the position of chief dental health officer in the World Health Organization (WHO), succeeding Bruce Rice from New Zealand. Again, my experience in Geneva was most interesting and rewarding, giving support to five regions of WHO. At that time, PAHO was the only region to have a dental health officer. While in Geneva, I had continuous contact with Gerry Leatherman, a strong leader of the FDI, and with Harold Hillenbrand, one the greatest international leaders in our profession. Both Gerry and Harold facilitated my days in Geneva, giving me strong support from organized dentistry. Actually, Harold raised funds in the United States for WHO to start a global dental

epidemiology program.

Finally, Dr. Chaves notes about his publications:

My first book was on dental public health, based on my experience, first in Brazil, then during the PAHO years, and in teaching the dental public health course in São Paulo, as part of my work with PAHO. The book was published in Spanish in 1962 by PAHO and widely distributed through Latin American with the title "Odonologia Sanitária." With the collaboration of several colleagues, a second edition came out in 1977 in Portuguese, entitled "Odontologia Social" (or "Social Dentistry"). It is still used, and I have been asked to work on another edition, which means restructuring the book, with coauthors of a new generation.

The two other books I wrote are called "Health and Systems" and "Health: Strategy for Change," and deal with the application of systems theory to the health field. At present I am working with what may be considered an evolution of systems theory and involves theoretical principles of complexity and chaos.

This brief review of Dr. Chaves' career demonstrates why he is such a deserving recipient. By almost any measure, Dr. Chaves is a successful and dedicated individual who has done much to improve the oral health and health of the public. It is an honor to present him with the 1999 International Special Merit Award for Community Dentistry.

1999 Distinguished Service Award: Alice Horowitz, PhD

Presented by B. Alex White, DDS, DrPH

The American Association of Public Health Dentistry's Distinguished Service Award is presented to an individual for excellent and distinguished service to public health dentistry. This award is the highest honor the association can bestow. One need only review the names of past recipients to appre-

ciate the level of commitment and distinguished service embodied in this award. It is indeed an honor and privilege to present the 1999 Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Alice Horowitz.

Journalist Gail Sheehy wrote: "The secret of a leader lies in the tests she has faced over the whole course of her

life and the habit of action she develops in meeting those tests." I'd like to share a little of Alice's journey with you today. I think you will agree that she is a remarkable person who has faced many tests and has developed exceptional habits to meet those challenges.