

nered with him on all of life, work, and family; Robert Mecklenburg, who was his most critical supporter and who challenged him and set high standards for his career; and Dennis Leverett, who taught him, among other lessons, how to live gracefully and effectively in the shadow of death. Of course, I must add that he did mention the Fluoride Five for making preparation for and taking the boards memorable.

His interest in public health was sparked when he experienced the University of Pennsylvania's Special Patient's Clinic. After three years in the IHS he began to see how one person, armed with the right tools, could make a difference.

I asked Skip—as I did the other awardees—how he finds time to do all that he does, especially since he does say yes often (something we really appreciate). He also does so many activities thoroughly and with gusto. His response was, "I'd like to be able to say that I have a laser-quick mind, process information like a Pentium computer, need little sleep, and/or have discovered a way to create time." Don't we all wish for the same? He was quick to add, "The truth is that there are only so many hours in the day and I use them for work." But he does find time for his favorite pastimes. Skip is an avid golfer, as noted by his email address "skip2golf@aol.com," who enjoys reading and gardening. He says

he would not do anything differently if he had his professional life to do over. He did say that he might try to relax and enjoy the journey a bit more.

As you all know, Skip is well into his second career, one in which he serves as the deputy executive director for the IADR/AADR. Skip has been recognized by his alma maters, his professional organizations, and extensively by the US Public Health Service—which includes the Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Award and Medallion. Skip, thank you again for your commitment to dental public health, the specialty in this case. It is our honor to present you with the 2001 AAPHD Special Merit Award.

Remarks on Receiving the 2001 Special Merit Award

Robert J. Collins, DMD, MPH

Thank you, Dushanka.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "Well done is better than well said." So, I'll try to be succinct today—especially since there are two Special Merit Awards to be awarded today.

I am very honored to be among today's distinguished list of recipients. As AAPHD past president, I had the pleasure of giving the Special Merit Award to Marsha Cunningham (1998). In 1990, I accepted this award on Dan Whiteside's behalf. So maybe the third time is a charm—and I must say that it is a great pleasure to accept this Special Merit Award on behalf of myself.

Jack Benny once said on receiving a prestigious award, "I really don't deserve this, but then I have arthritis and I don't deserve that either!" The difference of course is that one wouldn't voluntarily accept arthritis, but certainly would accept an award like this.

My thanks to Dushanka, Rebecca, and the Executive Council for this award. I consider it very special because, of all the organizations to which I belong, AAPHD is the one in which I have felt most at home—an affair

which has now lasted for over a quarter century.

At last year's meeting, I was just finishing my first year on the American Board of DPH—as director-elect—and thinking about how best to tackle my upcoming year as a full-fledged director. So, when Dushanka asked me to take on coordination of the report to the ADA on the Specialty of Dental Public Health, every bone in my body told me to say no. But of course, as we all understand, few of us have figured out how to say no to Dushanka, so instead of quickly saying no, I found myself saying yes. If my wife, Joan, had been on that trip with me, it might have been different, but she was not. Developing the report made for a hectic summer of 2000; nonetheless, with the help of many authors of the various sections and the guidance of the fine report done by Dave Striffler in the 1980s, it proved to be a doable task. The aid of my administrative assistant at IADR, Evonne Jackson, was also invaluable in helping me keep track of the various pieces during the process.

In the end, perhaps Ralph Waldo

Emerson had it right when he said: "The reward of a thing well done is having done it." So, thanks for the opportunity, Dushanka—but I am going to keep trying to figure out how to say no.

Dushanka mentioned my wife, Joan. I'd be remiss if I didn't also personally acknowledge that, without the support and tolerance of my spouse and best friend, the wonderful career I have had to date would not have been possible.

Dushanka also noted a few of my key mentors over the years. If time permitted today, I could add to her remarks about each and add many more—just as could all of you. A good starting place for me is the list of previous AAPHD award recipients listed on pages 12–13 of your program. Just a few additional mentors would include: my family dentist, Charlie Bourque; Jack McNeil, a fellow alumnus of St. Anselm College, who encouraged me to attend the University of Pennsylvania; and Rulon Dempster, who introduced me to the Special Patients Clinic at Penn and helped me find my way into the Public Health

Service.

Nevertheless, the simple fact is that we all mentor each other, and I believe AAPHD provides a very special environment that facilitates this process. There is an old Chinese proverb that goes something like this: "If you wish to be happy for an hour, get intoxi-

cated; be happy for three days, get married; for eight days, kill your pig and eat it; but if you want to be happy forever, be a gardener!" In public health in general and AAPHD in particular, I believe that we are all gardeners (in the figurative sense) who find happiness by mentoring each other

and helping one another to grow. Hopefully, we do the same in helping people to better understand and take control of their health. So in a very real way, this award reflects special merit on all of us—as gardeners in the field of dental public health. Thanks for letting me be part of today's harvest!