

jects and is a member of the National Advisory Board of the National Spit Tobacco Education Program. Since 1997, Rhys has been a member of the board of directors of Oral Health America. Rhys helped organize the 1996 Bethesda Oral Health Access Public/Private Leadership meeting that brought together leadership from 14 public and private dental organizations with other national experts on access to begin a dialogue and focus on strategies to encourage public/private partnerships at the federal, state, and local levels for opening doors to oral health care. Many of the recommendations that emerged from this meeting were achieved. This work also led to

the 1998 meeting in Lake Tahoe that many of us participated in.

One of the many lasting contributions that Rhys has made to AAPHD is his work with development and fundraising activities. Rhys began work in this area as program chair for the 1993 annual meeting in San Francisco. He increased outside support from about \$3,000 to more than \$25,000 in one year. You will remember, of course, that Jack Dillenberg was president that year. I think Rhys was worried that we'd go bankrupt without additional support, given Jack's many enthusiastic ideas on how to spend the money!

Albert Schweitzer once said, "I

don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." Through his work and contributions to improve the public's oral health, Rhys has served the profession and the public well. He has been recognized by the American Dental Association, the states of Iowa and Wisconsin, and the US Public Health Services for his work, and I am pleased to add the American Association of Public Health Dentistry to that list. On behalf of the AAPHD, I am honored to present the Special Merit Award to Dr. Rhys Jones.

Remarks on Receiving the 2000 Special Merit Award

Rhys B. Jones, DDS, MS

Alex, thank you very much for those kind remarks and this very special award. It is indeed a great honor to be recognized by your peers and professional organization, an organization whose work is so vital to the improvement of the nation's health.

You know, Alex, I'm the only AAPHD member who can top you on longevity of service as past president. Due to the untimely death of Dennis Leverett, I served two years as past president. You have served only 18 months. Actually, I presided over two-and-a-half award ceremonies if you include Joe Garagiola's Public Service Award in Las Vegas when I was president in 1995. But believe me, Alex, it is much easier to give the awards as past president than to be on the receiving end.

I would like to express my appreciation to the remainder of the awards/nomination committee, officers Dushanka Kleinman, Rebecca King, and Kim McFarland. They are the product of our previous nomination committees and are doing an excellent job. But, you know, as with ASTDD, we need to get more men involved with AAPHD, and we now need an Iowan on the Executive Council. For years we had two Iowans and now there are none. Joe Doherty's theory of the Iowa Mafia has been put to

rest, for a while.

A week or so after the wonderful award notification letter arrived from Alex, he sent a list of questions for the awards ceremony and instructed me to get back to him with the answers in a couple of weeks. It proved to be a most difficult task, but it did provide me with an outline to frame my acceptance remarks. I asked Alex if his questions were taken from James Lipton, who hosts "Inside the Actor's Studio" on the Bravo channel. Mr. Lipton asks each of his celebrity actor guests a series of questions about their life and career. Most struggle with the answers, as I did with Alex's format.

Alex's questions were as follows:

Why dental public health as a career?

After two years in private practice, I was employed in a hospital-based access program for children in the mid-1970s. I was working in dental public health, but had little training in the specialty. Dr. Naham Cons came to the University of Iowa in the late 1970s and revitalized the graduate program in dental public health. Ron Hunt and I were the first students since Pal Littleton had graduated from the MS program several years before. However, the primary reason why someone is drawn to dental public health as a career is of course genetic. If you have the right genetic coding for dental

public health and you have the opportunity for service, you can't escape it.

When was your first AAPHD meeting and what was most memorable about it?

The first meeting I attended was 1985 in San Francisco just after assuming the position as dental director in Wisconsin. The thing I remember most about the meeting was that it was in an old Holiday Inn on Market Street and you could not see the slide presentations because of large post barriers in an L-shaped room.

What have you gotten most out of AAPHD?

Without question the inspiration, support, guidance, and camaraderie of fellow AAPHD members.

What were your funniest moment and most memorable meeting?

The funniest experience was at a most memorable meeting as president in 1995 in Las Vegas. We presented the AAPHD Public Service Award to Joe Garagiola that year in an after-dinner program before about 350 AAPHD and Hispanic Dental Association members. I finished the introduction to Joe and presented him with the award and he was dying to get into his tobacco/baseball/comedy act. We had to force him to sit back down so Steve Corbin, then chief of staff for the US Surgeon General, could introduce Acting Surgeon General Dr. Audrey

Manley. Steve and I couldn't get Joe to sit back down and he's yelling in the microphone, "What kind of award is this that I don't even get to talk?" Finally Joe got seated, Dr. Manley was introduced, and she presented Joe with the surprise award of the Surgeon General's Medallion. In the end Joe had plenty to say.

Who have been your dental public health role models/mentors?

Two individuals stand out: Naham Cons, my graduate program director, who passed away last year, and Bob Mecklenburg, a mentor to most all of us in dental public health. Steve Corbin could be added to the list, but he's not old enough.

What was your most enjoyable project/committee?

As Alex mentioned earlier, the fundraising work for AAPHD proved to be most productive and led to the formation of the Development Committee. The results for meetings in Seattle, San Francisco, Las Vegas, and New Orleans enabled us to do much more at the annual meeting for the membership and still make a profit for AAPHD. It was true that Jack Dillenberg was a driving force for the need to raise money. Remember that Jack always liked to rent cruise boats and go for long rides. But we have established a strong financial base for AAPHD. With additional sponsorship we were also able to reach out to other organizations and institutions.

What is your favorite dental public health book?

I would probably say Jim Dunning's 1976 book, "Dental Care for Everyone" and his original publications on the school-based dental care systems of New Zealand and South Australia. Dr. Dunning was discussing the access to care issues of today in his book more than 25 years ago.

What do you believe to be your most important contribution to dental public health?

On a local and regional basis, the day-to-day treatment of low-income children and developmentally disabled adults and our objective taught to the dental students and residents who rotate through the St. Luke's access program. Our objective is to deliver the highest quality of dental treatment services and personal experiences to our patients and families. I say "our" in referring to the entire staff of St. Luke's Dental Health Center, who I'm pleased were able to join us today in Oak Brook.

On a national basis, Alex recognized the HRSA-funded Bethesda Oral Health Access Public/Private Leadership Meeting as the beginning of a national dialogue and focus on a US dental access to care crisis (1). The meeting did bring together leadership from 14 public and private dental organizations, including the American Dental Association, and established recommendations and strategies to encourage public/private partnerships to act on disparities in oral health care. It was difficult to get the ADA to participate initially. We were not too far removed from the days of conflict with the Coalition for Oral Health in health care reform times. But the ADA participated on an equal basis with dental public health and many of the recommendations from the meeting were accomplished.

Recommendation #1 from the Bethesda meeting was to arrange an administrative meeting at the secretary's level of the Department of Health and Human Services with representatives of the Bethesda meeting, HRSA, HCFA, and the USPHS Oral Health Coordinating Committee to discuss the crisis of lack of access to needed dental care for vulnerable US populations. This meeting was held with the assistant secretary for health, the chief medical officer of HRSA, and the chief of the Medicaid Bureau of HCFA and led to the Lake Tahoe meeting on ac-

cess to care in June of 1998. Another recommendation helped to establish a dental position at HCFA. Promotion of other public/private partnership flourished after the Lake Tahoe meeting. Many state dental Medicaid programs have been strengthened. Dental components of the state's Child Health Insurance Program have been implemented in many states. Yesterday, Dr. Peter Paulson, chair of the ADA Council on Access, Prevention, and Interprofessional Relations (CAPIR), gave the AAPHD keynote address and emphasized other recommendations from the Bethesda meeting that had been directed toward CAPIR—strategies such as taking models to state and local levels, recognizing local and regional model access programs, and support of residencies and repayment programs.

So we have made progress in the last four years since a number of you in the audience participated in the Bethesda forum. There is certainly a national discourse on oral health in the year 2000. We in dental public health have exciting and momentous events in the coming weeks and months. The release of "Oral Health in America: a Report of the Surgeon General," the Surgeon General's Conference on Children and Oral Health, and Oral Health America's Leadership Conference on the Surgeon General's Report will all be important opportunities for improving the oral health of the nation. We cannot let these opportunities pass us by.

I want to thank again the AAPHD awards committee and the membership for this high honor. It is a pleasure to work for you and with you.

References

1. Jones RB. "Savage inequities": can public/private partnership impact oral health access in the United States? *J Public Health Dent* 1998;58:2-6.