

2003 AAPHD Public Service Award: Raymond D. Rawson, DDS, MA

Presented by William R. Maas, DDS, MPH

The AAPHD Public Service Award is presented to an individual in recognition of substantial contribution through action related to public health dentistry issues. This year's recipient is Nevada State Senator Raymond D. Rawson. Dr. Rawson was elected to the Senate in 1984, where he has served to represent the citizens of Clark County District 6 for the past 18 years. In the Senate, he led the successful legislative efforts to fluoridate Las Vegas, one of the fastest growing cities in the United States.

Dr. Rawson grew up in Las Vegas. After receiving his doctor of dental surgery degree from Loma Linda University School of Dentistry, he returned to Nevada. He is director of dental programs for the University and Community College System of Nevada, a professor at the Community College of Southern Nevada, an adjunct professor at UNLV School of Dentistry, and deputy coroner and chief dental examiner for Clark County, Nevada.

Senator Rawson currently serves as vice-chairman and ranking member from southern Nevada on the influential Senate Finance Committee. Among other positions, he is chairman of the Interim Committee on Healthcare and chairman of the Task Force for the Fund for a Healthy Nevada. He was instrumental in creating the new University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Dentistry, which accepted its first class last fall. He also paved the way for the general practice dental residency and the pediatric dental residency programs at the University of Nevada Reno School of Medicine. In addition, Dr. Rawson initiated the Miles for Smiles traveling dental program that treats uninsured children.

As if that were not enough, his contributions have been extended nationwide through such activities as serving as chairman of the Reforming States Group, sponsored by the Milbank Memorial Fund. They work with



Oral Health Program Consultant for the Nevada State Health Division Christine Forsch receiving the AAPHD Public Service Award on behalf of Dr. Raymond D. Rawson from Dr. William R. Maas.

key legislators throughout the nation to improve access to health care.

Last year at the National Oral Health Conference, Dr. Rawson joined Carolyn Ballard in announcing the opening of competition for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "State Action for Oral Health Access Program." That program has since been implemented and Dr. Rawson continues to serve as senior consultant.

Last June, Senator Rawson was invited to speak at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's first public health law conference. There he explained the importance of tenacity, long-term strategies, and political skills. He emulates what can be accomplished by that combination of talents

and dedication to the health of one's city, state, and nation.

The list of professional and civic affairs associations with which Dr. Rawson has been active is too long to enumerate, and from them he has received many awards. Today we are pleased to add one more honor by presenting him the AAPHD Public Service Award. Unfortunately, legislative responsibilities have prevented Dr. Rawson from being able to come to Milwaukee today to receive this in person. Christine Forsch, Oral Health Program consultant for the Nevada State Health Division, has agreed to accept this award on Dr. Rawson's behalf and will present it to him at the earliest convenience.