

Remarks on Receiving the Special Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dentistry - International

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Madame President, Awards Chair-lady, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed a great pleasure and honor for me to be the recipient of this International Award in Community Dentistry from the American Association of Public Health Dentistry this year.

I would like to share this prestigious privilege with our Thai people and especially Thai public health dentists. As you may know, Thailand is a small developing country in Asia with the population of 63 million. Seventy-five percent of those are rural people who depend on the government public health services including dental health. Fortunately, one-third of the 8,000 dentists in Thailand are working as public health dentists either at the community or provincial hospitals countrywide. To a certain level, we have been successfully inte-

grated oral health to the existing public health care system, such as a primary health care approach and comprehensive universal health system with an emphasis on school children and the elderly as the main target groups. In this context, community dentistry is, therefore, a vital part in the dental curriculum in all dental schools in Thailand. Moreover, dental research for appropriate technology has been developed aiming at the affordable and accessible dental services to all people.

On this occasion, may I mention those who had been my mentors in the area of dental public health to achieve this International Award. The late Drs. David E. Barmes from World Health Organization, Geneva, and Herschel S. Horowitz from the National Institute of Dental Research, USA, both encouraged and supported

me in this area, especially fluoride research. In the meantime, I also have to recognize a few more international colleagues: Drs. Ingolf Moller from Denmark, Taco Pilot from the Netherlands, Alice Horowitz from USA and Yupin Songpaisan from Thailand; they are my inspiration to work and care for the public as well as looking for better oral health in the new generation. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for patiently understanding and allowing me to work in this area of public health dentistry for the past 30 years.

Once again I would like to thank the American Association of Public Health Dentistry Awards Committee for your kind consideration in presenting me with this prestigious award.

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