

NORTH CAROLINA DENTAL SOCIETY



2021
Awards
Program

Recognizing individuals most deserving in all phases
of dentistry, community service and leadership



NORTH CAROLINA
DENTAL SOCIETY®

Special Recognition Award

This person deserves recognition for a specific achievement or extraordinary deed, which may or may not be related to dentistry. This category provides for special circumstances that do not conform to other awards, and the nominee need not be a dentist.

MR. W. RAY ALLEN

Ray Allen is no stranger to members and volunteers. His passion for serving others started decades ago when he was a member of Civitan. In 1990, he joined the Masons and Shriners and served in leadership positions.

In 2010, Ray was asked to take care of the new NCDS radiology truck and drive it to each clinic. He hesitantly agreed and obtained a special driver's license allowing him to operate the truck. But Ray didn't want to sit around at the MOM clinics, so he applied to the UNC School of Dentistry to earn his X-ray certificate in dental radiographs. Ray enjoyed working with students on the truck and believed he shared his talents with them to take better X-rays.

The truck became Ray's child. Regardless of weather or circumstances, he went to where the truck was housed every two or three days to start it and the generator. He has participated in 247 dental events across NC, VA and SC. In 10 years, he never missed a clinic obligation.



MR. DUNCAN JENNINGS

Duncan Jennings, the Chief Innovation Officer for NC Services for Dentistry, joined the organization in June of 2019. Since then, he's made a tremendous impact on the Dental Society's mission – helping all members succeed.

Duncan graduated from UNC Chapel Hill where he majored in history with a concentration in industrial relations and played varsity football.

Previously, Duncan worked at Xerox, Grainger Industrial Supply and Ernest Packaging Solutions. He has extensive experience in sales, leadership, customer service and logistics – all skills that have served him well during the past two years.

Duncan is working to dramatically increase relevant business



services for members. His efforts start with listening to members, identifying needs and then getting creative. That's exactly what he did when COVID-19 struck. When he heard the struggles members were having securing PPE, he jumped into action, putting his supply chain management experience to good use.

Duncan helped secure and deliver more than 400,000 pieces of PPE to NC dentists – even setting up pickup stations and personally delivering supplies to members. Whether it's standing in the hot sun handing out PPE, getting dunked in frigid water, getting duct taped to a building or coming up with unconventional ideas – he does whatever it takes to help our members succeed.

Outstanding Young Dentist Award

This dentist must be a member in good standing of the NC Dental Society, must be under the age of 40 and must have practiced dentistry for fewer than 11 years. He or she shall have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities, involvement and service to the NC Dental Society.

DR. ANBEC DESHIELD-MAYES

Dr. DeShield-Mayes is a rising star and leader in organized dentistry who once shared her concerns of balancing her passion for organized dentistry with work and other obligations. But those concerns didn't slow her down. She served on the NCDS New Dentist Committee and her involvement has grown ever since, including being Third District President.



Dr. DeShield-Mayes doesn't shy away from challenges. At one point, she was treasurer of the Greensboro Medical Society and Secretary of the Old North State Dental Society while concurrently volunteering at Missions of Mercy clinics, the Colgate Dental Bus and the NC Baptist Men's Dental Bus...and practicing dentistry during the day.

Opening her own practice In 2015, she still keeps a packed schedule. She understands the importance of having management and administrative skills as a practice owner. That's why she pursued a Master's in Public Administration at UNC-Pembroke while working full time.

She has earned the Outstanding Young Dentist Award from the ONSDS and special recognitions from several other organizations.

DR. SHAMIK VAKIL

Before pursuing dentistry, Dr. Shamik Vakil served on Capitol Hill and abroad as a Congressional Fellow working with the International Foundation. He earned his D.D.S. at UNC Chapel Hill and continued his education at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Dentistry where he earned a Specialty Certificate in Pediatric Dentistry and a Master of Science degree.



Dr. Vakil is a Board-Certified Diplomate and a member of many professional organizations, including the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, the College of Diplomates of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, the ADA, the NC Dental Society, and the ICD. He is a Fellow of the NC Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and serves as a NC Dental Society Alternate Delegate to the ADA.

Beyond caring for his patients, Dr. Vakil enjoys travel, scuba diving, hiking, concerts, cooking and is an avid car and motorcycle enthusiast. He's a proud supporter of all Charlotte sport teams, especially the Carolina Panthers.

Citizenship Award

This award recognizes a dentist who has rendered outstanding service to his fellow man or woman, either related to a specific event or over a period of years. Areas of achievement may include civic affairs community or public service, or cultural, humanitarian and religious activities. He or she must also be a member in good standing of the NC Dental Society.

DR. JOHN P. PRUITT

Dr. John Pruitt dedicated his life to taking care of others. He served as a Major in the US Army Reserves for more than 10 years. He was a deacon, a Sunday school teacher and dental missionary through Calvary Baptist Church, Pinedale Christian Church and Center Grove Church.



Dr. Pruitt provided free dental clinics monthly in Winston-Salem, Veterans' clinics around North Carolina and care to more than 50 locations around the globe for underprivileged communities. He was a founder of Footbridge, a non-profit organization that connects medical professionals with churches around the world to meet the physical and spiritual concerns of people in need.

Winston Smiles, the practice he owned in Winston-Salem, was like a second family to him. He practiced dentistry for 40 years and earned many honors and awards, including the prestigious Lifelong Learning and Service Recognition award from the Academy of General Dentistry.

Dr. Pruitt died unexpectedly April 2, 2021 at the age of 67, but his legacy will live on.

Meritorious Achievement Award

These honorees have demonstrated significant contributions to dentistry, including lifetime achievements. He or she may qualify for this award in the area of leadership, academics, research, health care delivery, professionalism or service to organized dentistry. They must also be members in good standing of the NC Dental Society.

DR. MARK CASEY

As Dental Director for the NC Medicaid Clinical Section, Mark Casey, D.D.S., M.P.H., works to encourage dentists across the state to provide oral health services for those in need through Adult Dental Medicaid and programs for children.



He's passionate about caring for those most in need while also working to support the dentists providing care. In a recent letter to the NCDS House of Delegates Dr. Casey wrote, "The Division of Health Benefits and its fiscal agent, CSRA/General Dynamics Information Technology, will continue to strive to respond to dental providers' concerns and make improvements to our program so that our beneficiaries receive the quality they deserve and our providers receive the customer service they need to enable them to deliver the oral health care services they render in good faith."

Dr. Casey is an avid sports fan. Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, he remains a Pirates fan. When it comes to college sports, he may be considered a "man divided" since he studied history at Duke and dentistry at UNC. He's also a music enthusiast and a proud Irishman.

Distinguished Service Scroll

This award is the NC Dental Society's most prestigious award. Nominees may be dentists, auxiliary or lay people and need not be a resident of our state. He or she should be nearing or have completed careers during which they demonstrated outstanding service, leadership and dedication to the profession of dentistry and/or the improvement of health for the people of North Carolina.

DR. FRANK COURTS

Dr. Frank Courts works tirelessly for children in North Carolina. He began a school-based clinic in Rocky Mount where students receive oral health care and are assigned to a "dental home" as needed.

Dr. Courts is active in the North Carolina Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the NC Dental Society where he chairs the Council on Prevention and Oral Health. The Council is focused on addressing access to care as well as preventative and restorative treatment to North Carolinians in need.

A native of Rockingham County, Dr. Courts completed his D.D.S. in Pediatric Dentistry at the UNC School of Dentistry. He also earned his Ph.D. in Microbiology/Immunology at the UNC School of Medicine. From 1980 – 2002 he was on the faculty at the University of Florida College of Dentistry. He currently practices in Boone at OP Smiles and the Ashe County Health Department.



DR. MORRIS H. GRIFFIN

Dr. Morris Griffin has spent his career involved in organized dentistry and taking on leadership roles. One of his nominators wrote, "his leadership abilities have guided us through some tough times. Without him, I would hate to think where we might be. He is indeed a true professional that has made a positive impact on dentistry and the NC public, year after year."

Dr. Griffin is a past president of the NC Dental Society, a life-time member of the ADA and the Military Officers of America Association and NC Army National Guard Association. He's also a member of the ACD, ICD and Academy of Dentistry International.

His service isn't limited to dentistry. He's a past campaign



chair of the United Way and has served on the boards of the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce and Medical Security Insurance Company.

After decades of private practice, Dr. Griffin is now enjoying retirement in Jefferson, NC.

DR. WILLIAM MILNER

Dr. Bill Milner has a great love for his patients and a crusader's fervent conviction that everyone, regardless of age or abilities, deserves the same level of dental care. He's devoted his career to improving the health of special needs patients, especially children and senior citizens.



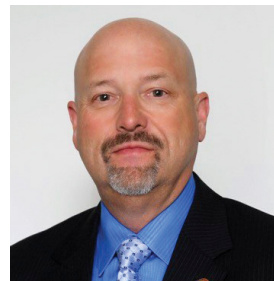
Dr. Milner is president of Access Dental Care, Inc, a non-profit organization seeking to develop special care dental programs serving people in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, group homes and home health and hospice programs. He runs a clinical practice with Access Dental Care and maintains a private practice for special-care patients in Guilford and Randolph counties.

He's a member of the NCDS' Council on Prevention and Oral Health and serves as a consultant to the ADA Council on Access, Prevention and Interprofessional Relations.

As a member of the NC Lieutenant Governor's Task Force on Dental Access, Dr. Milner helped develop policy to improve access to dental care.

DR. BRAD MORGAN

Dr. Brad Morgan practices in Canton, NC. Throughout his career he has served on the NC Dental Society's Board of Trustees as well as various committees and task forces. He has also been a member of the NC ADA Delegation and on the board of the NC State Board of Dental Examiners.



When he's not practicing dentistry, Dr. Morgan enjoys hiking and golfing. He and his friends plan several trips a year and Dr. Morgan always brings back a flag from each of the golf courses he plays.

He has also tried his hand at home improvement – building a magnificent outdoor living space that includes a fireplace, heaters and impressive stone work.

DR. M. ALEC PARKER

Dr. Alec Parker spent 28 years as a solo practitioner in Fletcher, NC before becoming executive director of the NC Dental Society in 2008. He is the first dentist to serve in this role. His commitment to organized dentistry spans decades and his involvement includes too many organizations to list.



One of his nominators wrote that his accomplishments “include passage of legislation bringing clarity and transparency to contracts between dentists and dental benefit carriers. He played a key role in creating a recognized foundation for the NCDS whose mission is to increase access to and enhance the quality of oral health care for the residents of NC. He has served on a task force to identify and resolve gaps in Dental Society governance, which has led to more effective leadership and an increased leadership people for the NCDS.”

Alec always makes time to talk with members and answer questions. He enjoys going to study clubs and legislative events.

Student Leaders in Organized Dentistry Award

Awarded to deserving fourth-year dental students who are in good academic standing and have shown exceptional leadership and interest in organized dentistry. He or she may have been involved with the NC Dental Society or other professional dental organizations while in dental school and display outstanding potential for future leadership in organized dentistry.

DR. CHRISTOPHER LANE UNC ADAMS SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Throughout dental school, Christopher Lane has advocated for his patients and his peers. He has shown special interest in public health dentistry, pursuing opportunities to advance his clinical skills and to meet the oral health needs of the people of North Carolina.



Christopher is a J. Bradley Wilson Albert Schweitzer Fellow addressing edentulism by providing free

dentures, urgent care, and oral health education for homeless patients with the Samaritan Health Center in Durham.

He served as the vice president of the Class of 2021 where he partnered with administration to facilitate a safe and timely return of predoctoral students to clinic during the early months of the pandemic.

Christopher received his D.D.S. in May 2021 and plans to practice in eastern NC.

DR. SKYLER LAGCHER O'BRIEN ECU SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE

Skyler Lagcher O'Brien started her journey in dentistry as a hygienist. She decided to further her career and become a dentist, with dental school goals of getting involved and soaking up as much knowledge as possible.



She was appointed to a national position for the American Student Dental Association's (ASDA) Council on Advocacy and served as council representative and liaison for two regional districts covering 14 dental schools. Skyler is 2021 Class President.

She has volunteered for Give Kids a Smile, NC Missions of Mercy and Wake Smiles as well as at a food bank, Ronald McDonald House, Habitat for Humanity and Adopt-A-Highway programs.

After graduation, Skyler plans to enroll in an Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) program with the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in Fayetteville.

Consider Your Peers for 2022 Awards

We need your help to recognize the best and brightest in organized dentistry. We ask that you carefully consider your peers, coworkers, former classmates and friends who are deserving of accolades and recognition through the NC Dental Society Awards program. Please send your ideas and nominations to The Awards Committee, via Prissy Allen (pallen@ncdental.org).