

2025 AWARDS

Recognizing Individuals
MOST DESERVING
—— in all phases of ——
dentistry, community service,
and leadership



NORTH CAROLINA
DENTAL SOCIETY®

Agenda

INTRODUCTION

NC Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

WELCOME

Dr. Roslyn Crisp
President, NC Dental Society

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Brett Kessler
President, American Dental Association

Dr. Robert Stowe
Immediate Past President, NC Dental Society

2024 Annual Session Committee
Dr. David Kwon, Dr. Catherine Bickley, Dr. Mark Oliver,
and Dr. Shelley Olson

2024 Student Trustees
Ms. Elmira Hezarkhani, Dr. Markus Mosley

2024 SNDA Student Trustees
Dr. Tayia Marable, Dr. Jordyn Williams

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Dr. Stan Hardesty
Chair, Awards Committee

Student Leaders in Organized Dentistry Award

Special Recognition Award

Citizenship Award

Outstanding Young Dentist Award

Meritorious Achievement Award

Distinguished Service Scroll

CLOSING

Dr. Stan Hardesty

A special thank you to our Awards Ceremony sponsor,
the North Carolina Dental Society Healthcare Plan



NORTH CAROLINA
DENTAL SOCIETY®
HEALTHCARE PLAN

2025 Award Winners

STUDENT LEADERS IN ORGANIZED DENTISTRY

Each of the state's dental schools selects a deserving fourth-year dental student in good academic standing who has shown exceptional leadership and interest in organized dentistry. Often, they 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. MARKUS MOSLEY

ECU School of Dental Medicine



Dr. Markus Mosley (Greenville) is a graduate of the East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine, where he demonstrated outstanding leadership, service, and dedication to the dental profession. As President of the ECU chapter of the American Student Dental Association (ASDA), he led initiatives advocating for student rights and professional development, and represented ECU at the North Carolina Dental Society's Board of Trustees and House of Delegates.

Markus is known for his infectious energy, natural charisma, and deep sense of empathy. Whether presenting award-winning research, organizing community outreach, or connecting with classmates and patients, his authenticity and compassion shine through. As he receives this recognition, Markus continues to exemplify servant-leadership in dentistry. After graduation, Dr. Mosley will further his education through the AEGD program at The Ohio State University.

DR. ADRIANA ZELAYA

UNC Adams School of Dentistry



Dr. Adriana Zelaya (Chapel Hill) earned her D.D.S. from the UNC Adams School of Dentistry. During dental school, she held several leadership roles, including President of UNC ASDA where she advanced student engagement, mentorship, and community outreach. As Vice President and District 4 Liaison, she helped UNC ASDA earn the 2022–2023 Outstanding Pre-Dental Involvement Award.

Dr. Zelaya also served as Communications Chair for the American Association of Public Health Dentistry and Social Chair for the American Association of Women Dentists, supporting initiatives for women in dentistry. She acted as a liaison to the North Carolina Dental Society and received ASDA's 2023 National Excellence in Leadership Award. In 2024, she joined a dental mission to Uganda, providing care and oral health education to underserved communities. Dr. Zelaya is passionate about expanding access to care and building meaningful relationships with her patients.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG DENTIST AWARD

Nominees in this category must be under the age of 40 and have practiced dentistry for fewer than 11 years. They should demonstrate outstanding leadership qualities, involvement, and service to the NC Dental Society.

DR. DAVIA NICKELSON



Dr. Davia Nickelson (Hillsborough) is a native of Stoneville, North Carolina, and earned her undergraduate degree from Elizabeth City State University before completing her D.D.S. at the UNC Adams School of Dentistry. During her time at UNC, she developed a passion for service, working with student-led organizations and traveling to Malawi to provide dental care. Dr. Nickelson also completed a General Practice Residency at UNC Hospitals, where she gained extensive experience in oral surgery, sedation dentistry, and treating medically compromised patients.

Dr. Nickelson has made Hillsborough her home and purchased her first practice this spring. She is committed to serving the local community and is an active member of the Orange County Board of Health, the North Carolina Dental Society, and the Old North State Dental Society. Dr. Nickelson is also deeply involved in volunteer work, participating in NC Dental Society Foundation MOM clinics, dental buses, and serving as the assistant director of the SNDA CAARE's Clinic, which she helped found. When not working, Dr. Nickelson enjoys traveling and combining her love of dentistry with her passion for exploration, gaining new perspectives to better serve her patients.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Honorees in this category deserve 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.

DR. LANCE HUTCHENS



Dr. Lance Hutchens (Wilmington) is a dedicated periodontist who began his dental education at the UNC Adams School of Dentistry, where he earned his D.D.S. He went on to complete a residency in Periodontology and Implantology at the Medical College of Georgia, also earning a master's degree in Oral Biology. During his final year, he served as Chief Resident. Dr. Hutchens holds undergraduate degrees from North Carolina State University and Queens University.

Licensed in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Montana, Dr. Hutchens is an adjunct clinical professor at both UNC-Chapel Hill and Cape Fear Community College, where he mentors periodontal residents and dental hygiene students. He has received awards for his research and contributed to professional journals and textbooks.

A committed lifelong learner and leader in his field, Dr. Hutchens is a past president of the Cape Fear Dental Study Club and remains active on its board. One of his most meaningful recent experiences was helping lead the Foundation's Missions of Mercy clinic in Wilmington, where he and a team of volunteers provided care to more than 870 patients over two and a half days.

CITIZENSHIP AWARD

This award recognizes dentists who render outstanding service to their 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.

DR. RON KEY



Dr. Ronald (Ron) Key (Newton) has devoted more than four decades to providing compassionate dental care across North Carolina and around the world. He earned both his B.A. in chemistry and his D.D.S. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Over his 42-year career, he's practiced in Sparta, The Gambia (West Africa), and Newton.

Dr. Key is a fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry and a member of the American Dental Association, Christian Medical and Dental Association, Western Piedmont Dental Society, and the Foothills Dental Continuum. He currently serves as volunteer dental director of the Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry Dental Clinic, where he both treats patients and mentors Catawba Valley Community College dental hygiene students.

Deeply committed to service, Dr. Key has provided volunteer care through Footbridge, Inc., the NC Baptist Dental Bus, Foundation MOM clinics, and the Chanku Waste dental clinic on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE SCROLL

This 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. They 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. JEFF THOMAS



Dr. Jeffrey (Jeff) Thomas (Wilmington) grew up in Hubert and Kinston, North Carolina, and earned both his undergraduate and D.D.S. degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served four years as a U.S. Navy Dental Officer, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander, before completing his specialty training in periodontics in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Thomas practiced in New Bern for more than three decades, earning a reputation for his expertise in anterior implants and complex interdisciplinary care. He later practiced in Wilmington until retiring in 2021. His mentorship of young dentists and generous collaboration with peers helped elevate the standard of care across eastern North Carolina and beyond.

A respected voice in organized dentistry, Dr. Thomas is a fellow of the American Academy of Esthetic Dentistry, the American and International Colleges of Dentists, and more. He served on the editorial boards of *Compendium* and the *Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry*, and has delivered more than 300 lectures locally, nationally, and internationally. He is a past president of the North Carolina Society of Periodontists and served nearly 25 years on the NC Dental Board's Anesthesia and Sedation Advisory Committee.

He founded and continues to lead the thriving Evidence-Based Dental Study Club in New Bern, supporting more than 70 members. His contributions across education, service, and clinical care continue to shape North Carolina dentistry today.

MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

These honorees demonstrate significant contributions to dentistry, including lifetime achievements in leadership, academics, research, health care delivery, professionalism or service to organized dentistry.

DR. SHELLEY OLSON



Dr. Shelley Olson (Oxford) graduated from Appalachian State University with a B.S. in biology and earned her D.D.S. from UNC Adams School of Dentistry, where she served as President of the American Association of Women Dentists. Dr. Olson has built a distinguished career in private practice and dental leadership, serving in various elected

positions at local, district, state, and national levels. She is currently the North Carolina Dental Society President-Elect and Vice Chair of the American Dental Association's Council on Dental Benefits Programming.

Dr. Olson's dedication to her profession extends beyond leadership, with active involvement in community outreach programs such as Wake Smiles, the Foundation's MOM program, and Donated Dental Services. Her contributions have been recognized with numerous accolades, including the prestigious North Carolina Commendation Award in 2014. A Fellow of the American College of Dentists and the International College of Dentists, Dr. Olson is a tireless advocate for advancing dental care and supporting the professional growth of her colleagues. She is married to Dr. David Olson, and they have a daughter, Keenan.

DR. MARK PABST



Dr. Mark D. Pabst (Greenville) has practiced general dentistry in Greenville since 1994. A native of Iowa, he earned his undergraduate degree from East Carolina University and his D.D.S. from UNC Adams School of Dentistry. Dr. Pabst has been a prominent figure in organized dentistry, having served in various leadership roles, including President

of the Fifth District Dental Society and Speaker of the House for the North Carolina Dental Society. He has represented North Carolina at the national level as an ADA Delegate and has chaired multiple search committees, notably for the NC Dental Society and the ECU School of Dental Medicine.

Dr. Pabst's leadership extends into community service, with decades of active involvement in organizations such as the University City Kiwanis Club, where he served as President, and the Greenville Community Shelter, where he held many leadership roles, including President. A fellow of both the International and American Colleges of Dentists, Dr. Pabst is also deeply committed to mentoring the next generation of dentists, having guided students at both UNC and ECU. His extensive and sustained contributions to education, advocacy, and service have left an indelible mark on North Carolina dentistry. He and his wife, Mary Jon, have three daughters and are active members of First Presbyterian Church in Greenville.