

2003 Alpha Omega Alpha Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Awards

Each year, in collaboration with the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), faculty members in American schools of medicine are nominated by their colleagues and deans to receive one of the prestigious Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Awards. Nominations are reviewed by a committee of their peers chosen by AΩA and the AAMC. This year's committee members were: Walter J. Bo, Ph.D., Frank M. Calia, M.D., Jordan J. Cohen, M.D., Ph.D., Ruth-Marie Fincher, M.D., Cyril Grum, M.D., Jeanette Norden, Ph.D., Kelley Skeff, M.D., and Steven E. Weinberger, M.D. Robert P. Sabalis, Ph.D., Associate Vice President, Section for Student Affairs and Programs at the AAMC coordinated the nominations and selection process.

Winners are outstanding teachers in either basic science or clinical disciplines, and each receives \$10,000. The medical dean's office is given \$5,000 to enhance teaching programs for medical students, and the local Alpha Omega Alpha chapter receives \$1,000. The awards were presented at a black tie reception and dinner at the annual AAMC meeting in Washington, DC, November 8, 2003.

This year's distinguished teachers are:

Joel M. Felner, M.D.

(AΩA, Emory University School of Medicine, 1980)

Professor of Cardiology and Associate Dean for Clinical Education at Emory University School of Medicine

How pleased we are that one of our Distinguished Teachers is not only a cardiologist, chief of echocardiology, and co-director of the Coronary Care Unit, but also is heavily invested in teaching medical students. Perhaps Dr. Felner was bitten by the teaching bug while working at Emory with Dr. Willis Hurst, but whenever this happened, he has contributed mightily both to



teaching and to designing better ways to teach. Dr. Felner is a graduate of Columbia University, where he earned a B.A. in history, and the University of Cincinnati, where he received his internal medicine training. Emory provided his fellowship training in cardiology, and he has remained on the faculty there since his first appointment in 1974.

Cardiology is a field dependent upon careful history and physical examinations of patients. In addition to traditional emphases on the physical exam of the heart, however, Dr. Felner is one of the principal designers of "Harvey," a computer-dependent simulator that can reproduce multiple cardiac conditions. Despite Dr. Felner's multiple important contributions to the echocardiographic literature, he would never state that echocardiography has replaced the cardiac physical examination!

At Emory, Dr. Felner received the Best Basic Sciences Professor Award twice for his success in directing the pathophysiology course for preclinical students. Students have recognized his clinical teaching by awarding him the Outstanding Clinical Professor Award seven times. Emory gives several awards for teaching, and Dr. Felner received the Evangeline Papageorge Award for Outstanding Teaching

in 1997, and the Emory Williams Distinguished Teaching Award in 1998. The American Heart Association named him Teacher of the Year in 1995/1996. Dr. Felner's abilities to bridge the gap between basic science and clinical diagnosis makes him an exciting as well as informative teacher.

Barry D. Mann, M.D.

(AΩA, Drexel University College of Medicine, 1999)

Associate Professor of Surgery at Drexel University College of Medicine

Barry Mann is the fifth member of a department of surgery to receive an AΩA Distinguished Teacher Award, and he is recognized for his many creative methods of teaching that have enhanced the learning experiences of students at Drexel University School of Medicine (formerly MCP-Hahnemann). Interestingly, Dr. Mann's A.B. degree from the University of Pennsylvania was in classical studies. He received his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and his surgical training at Tufts and UCLA. Some of his interests in teaching have been stimulated by a Surgical Education Research Fellowship from the Association for Surgical Education, and a stint at the Harvard-Macy Institute for Leaders in Medical Education.

Dr. Mann's innovative teaching strategies include the teaching of three-dimensional surgical concepts by use of two-dimensional paper cutting, and the



use of an interactive game-based tool for learning surgical management algorithms on the computer. He has led a working group at Drexel to create a curriculum for years one and two, now termed the Interdisciplinary Foundations of Medicine, and well received by both students and faculty. Dr. Mann's formal commitments to teaching now include the chairmanship of the Education Coordinating Committee and program director in general surgery.

From 1993 to 2003, Dr. Mann was awarded 17 special teaching awards at commencement, including the Golden Scalpel Award, Golden Apple Award, the Blockley-Osler Award for Excellence in Teaching Clinical Medicine at the Bedside, the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindbach Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching, and the Dean's Special Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching. Four classes at Drexel have invited him to administer the Hippocratic Oath to them at graduation. The Association for Surgical Education presented Dr. Mann with an the Outstanding Teacher of Surgery Prize in 1998.

Gabriel T. Virella, M.D., Ph.D.
(AQA, Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine, 1989)
Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the Medical University of South Carolina

Gabriel Virella received this Distinguished Teacher Award for contributions to learning in basic sciences. We are especially proud of him, because for many years he has been the councillor for the MUSC chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha and for three years a member of AQA's board of directors.

Dr. Virella was trained in medicine and pathology in Lisbon, Portugal. He arrived at MUSC in 1975, and was promoted to professor in 1980. His contributions to education have been many: he worked out a successful fusion of the microbiology and infectious disease

courses, and has served as general coordinator of this combined presentation. In 1999, immunology joined this group and Dr. Virella became its director. As early as 1977, he introduced patient-oriented problem solving (POPS) into the pre-clinical curriculum, where it is still used today. POPS packages based upon Dr. Virella's innovative presentations have been introduced into eight other courses. In 1993, he added computer-assisted learning as regular features of his courses; the courses in microbiology/infectious diseases are available for national distribution. Dr. Virella's leadership in curricular reform has earned him the opportunity to direct revision of the entire year-two curriculum.

At MUSC Dr. Virella received the University Teaching Excellence Award and the state Governor's Distinguished Professor Award. Students awarded him Golden Apple recognition for seven years. MUSC recognized Dr. Virella in 2002 by making him an Honorary Alumnus.

Lawrence D.H. Wood, M.D., Ph.D.
(AQA, University of Chicago Division of the Biological Sciences Pritzker School of Medicine, 1993)
Dean of Medical Education at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine

Lawrence Wood's Distinguished Teacher Award comes as the logical capstone of his many years of recognition by students for his teaching prowess and his continuing role in the revisions of the medical school curriculum. His current administrative

post puts him in command of all medical education, including medical school admissions and student services, as well as the curriculum. Dr. Wood founded the University of Chicago's first organization recognizing those interested in and good at teaching, the Society of Medical Educators, a group that meets frequently to discuss current issues and challenges in medical education. Research in education also has been his forte; he has received a grant from the National Institute for Healthcare Research on "Spirituality in Medicine," from the Harvard-Macy Institute on "Teaching Residents How to Teach Medical Students," and an award from the Gold Foundation, "Residents as Teachers and Role Models for Medical Students."

In 1984, less than two years after joining the UC faculty, the medical school graduates presented Dr. Wood with the J.A. McClintock Award for Outstanding Teaching in the Medical School, and in each of the last 19 consecutive years he has been named one of the Outstanding Teachers by the graduating class. Not surprisingly, this is an institutional record! Dr. Wood has received recognition as the Outstanding Basic Science Teacher at the Pritzker school three times, and, independently of the Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award, Pritzker AQA students chose him twice as the local AQA Outstanding Teacher.

Edward D. Harris, Jr., M.D.
Editor

