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### **WDA recognizes 16 for contributions to organized dentistry and public oral health**

**WEST ALLIS, Wis. – Dr. Cliff Hartmann**, a retired pediatric dentist from New Berlin, is the recipient of the 2023 Wisconsin Dental Association Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his long history of service to the profession and leadership as WDA president. Dr. Hartmann was one of 16 honorees at the WDA's annual Pyramid of Pride Awards held Nov. 3 in Middleton.

A career-long member of the WDA, Dr. Hartmann has held several leadership roles with the Association, including service on the Committee for the Dental Home Initiative, which aimed to secure a primary dental provider for every child in Wisconsin by the time they reached 12 months of age. After serving terms as vice president and president-elect, Dr. Hartmann was sworn in as WDA President in November 2021. During his presidency, Dr. Hartmann established the Wisconsin Dental Workforce Workgroup to address critical shortages in Wisconsin. The coalition united representatives from the WDA, Wisconsin Technical College System, Departments of Health Services and Workforce Development, Office of Rural Health and dental hygiene/assistant and healthcare associations.

**Lani Becker** received the WDA Foundation Philanthropic Award for coordinating the 2023 Mission of Mercy which was held in Green Bay. As a result of her leadership, the 2023 MOM resulted in 650 volunteers providing preventative and corrective dental treatments to 702 patients.

The Community Outreach Award was awarded to five honorees:

- **Dr. Lakisha Arif-Holmes** (Wauwatosa) was recognized for her commitment to health equity and service to vulnerable populations. In addition to being an active member of the ADA, WDA, Greater Milwaukee Dental Association and Special Care Dentistry Association, she serves as co-chair for Give Kids a Smile Day, which provides free dental screenings for underserved children.
- **Dr. Jeffrey Champion** (Waupun) was recognized for his local and international volunteer service. He has organized dental mission trips and works with Church Health Services in Beaver Dam to provide oral healthcare for underserved individuals.
- **Dr. David Gundersen** (Fitchburg) was recognized for his commitment to improving the oral health of children. In addition to clinical practice, Dr. Gundersen is the founder and president of Hometown Smiles, which supports collaboration among schools, dental offices, prevention programs and community partners.
- **Ian Hedges**, former CEO of Healthnet of Rock County, was recognized for his advocacy for underserved individuals. Under his leadership, the organization completed two

expansions of its dental clinic, including a dedicated space for treating individuals with development disabilities.

- **Dr. Thomas Nockerts**, a retired general dentist from Green Bay, was recognized for his steadfast support of the WDA Foundation and the 2023 Mission of Mercy. As president of the WDA Foundation, Dr. Nockerts raised funds, served as a site lead and coordinated innumerable logistics.

**Richard and Micky Wilde**, owners of WDA Equipment & Service Solutions, received the Friend of Dentistry Award to honor their ongoing contributions to the mission of the Wisconsin Dental Association through multiple dental equipment services including service, maintenance, new offices, new equipment, used equipment, dental office design, remodels and assistance with practice transitions.

**WSAW Newschannel 7** of Wausau, was awarded the Media Awareness Award for its coverage of numerous oral health news stories ranging from public health to social media to workforce development.

The Communications Award was given to two WDA member dentists:

- **Dr. Jay Banez** (Delavan/Whitewater) was recognized for his outstanding work with the WDA's Communications Committee. Under his leadership, the WDA launched the InspireSmiles public awareness/social media campaign to help address the dental workforce shortage by promoting the many advantages of dental hygienist and assistant career paths.
- **Dr. Eric Childs** (Manitowoc) was recognized for his commitment to sharing the Association's mission and message as a media spokesperson. Dr. Childs volunteered as the public relations lead for the 2023 Mission of Mercy. In this role, he developed a strategy for increasing MOM awareness through earned and social media.

**Dr. Emily Eckdahl** (Brookfield) received the New Dentist Leadership Award in recognition of her dedication to organized dentistry at the local, state and national levels. Dr. Eckdahl serves on the WDA Dental Benefits and Legislative committees, as well as on the Board of Directors for the Greater Milwaukee Dental Association.

**Dr. Kenneth Geiger** (Sheboygan) received the Outstanding Leadership in Mentoring Award in recognition of his continued efforts as co-chair of the MUSoD-Pierre Fauchard Academy-WDA Mentor Program and his longstanding service as a mentor. Dr. Geiger also supports the WDA by serving as a state committee member for Mission of Mercy.

The WDA Award of Honor was given to three honorees:

- **Nan Dreves**, RDH, received the award in recognition of her exceptional service to the Wisconsin dental community, especially through the COVID-19 pandemic. Through consulting and speaking engagements, small group trainings, manual development and in-office inspections, she shares her expertise in OSHA, CDC and HIPAA compliance with dentists and their teams throughout the state.
- **Pam Entorf**, RDH, received the award in recognition of her 30 years of commitment to teaching as the program director for the dental hygiene and dental assistant programs at

Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) in Eau Claire. In addition to teaching, Pam serves as the clinical manager for the CVTC Dental Clinic, which serves low-income patients.

- **Dr. Rick Mueller** (Hales Corners), received the award in recognition of his service to organized dentistry at the component, state and national levels. Dr. Mueller retired from private practice in 2020, after 40 years of serving patients in southeastern Wisconsin.

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#### **About the Wisconsin Dental Association**

The Wisconsin Dental Association, with 3,100 member dentists and a number of dental hygienists, is the leading voice for dentistry in Wisconsin. WDA members are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. Established in 1870, the WDA is headquartered in West Allis and has a legislative office in Madison. The WDA is affiliated with the American Dental Association - the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. For more information, call 414-276-4520, visit [WDA.org](http://WDA.org) and find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).