A Tribute to Dr. Morgan L. Allison
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The annual scientific meeting of the American Dental Society of Anesthesiology in San Francisco is dedicated to Morgan L. Allison, D.D.S., one of the founding fathers of the Society. As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of this society (1953-1983), it seems appropriate to recognize this great leader for his contributions and dedicated service to the dental profession, to anesthesiology in dentistry and specifically to the A.D.S.A.

Dr. Allison was raised on a farm in southeastern Ohio and was influenced by a local dentist to enroll at The Ohio State University to study dentistry. He received his D.D.S. degree in 1944 and then joined the U.S. Army for a tour of duty with the 30th Infantry Division in Germany. After the war he returned to Ohio State to pursue post-graduate studies in physiology, and was subsequently recruited by the Chairman of Anesthesiology at University Hospital, J. Jay Jacoby, M.D., Ph.D., to enroll in the anesthesia residency program. Following his anesthesia training, Dr. Allison became widely known for his depth of knowledge and adept clinical skills in anesthesiology in many Columbus-area hospitals.

In 1950 Morgan completed a two-year graduate assistantship in oral surgery at the Ohio State University College of Dentistry under the leadership of Dr. D.P. Snyder, and in 1953 he was appointed Associate Professor and Chairman of Oral Surgery and Anesthesia in the College and Chief of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at University Hospitals.

On August 30, 1953 a meeting was held in Cleveland to plan for a national society for anesthesiology in dentistry. Among those in attendance were Drs. Daniel Lynch, William Kinney, Leonard Monheim, J.H. Mervis and Morgan Allison. The American Dental Society of Anesthesiology was chosen as the official name of the organization, and Dr. Allison was elected to serve as the first President-Elect. He also served as President from 1960-1962.

Doctor Allison initiated the first graduate program in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Ohio State in 1953 and emphasized outpatient anesthesia and research as well as clinical oral surgery. He was the first dentist in Ohio to administer endotracheal anesthesia and taught the technique to hundreds of other dentists. His early general anesthesia research projects on dental clinic outpatients utilized EKG monitoring and arterial blood gas determinations in an era when the use of curare was fairly new and before the introduction of methohexitol, halothane, or succinylcholine.

In 1957 Dr. Allison was promoted to Professor and Chairman of the Section of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Anesthesia at Ohio State and in 1966 was appointed a Regents Professor by the Ohio Board of Regents, an honor enjoyed by only eleven other highly distinguished educators in the history of higher education in Ohio. A diplomat of the American board of Oral/Maxillofacial Surgery and a Fellow in General Anesthesia of the A.D.S.A., he has published numerous scientific articles in major national journals as well as several chapters in oral surgery textbooks. He has presented scientific papers in this country and in Europe, Canada, Asia, New Zealand, and Central and South America. Twelve sound-color motion pictures on oral and maxillofacial surgery bear the distinctive mark of Allison; four have won national awards, including "Surgical Palate Splitting" which emphasizes the outpatient nasoendotracheal general anesthesia techniques he taught his residents.
Dr. Allison has served in various capacities in numerous dental organizations including Chairman of the Council on Hospital Dental Services of the American Dental Association, a member of the Advisory Board of both the A.B.O.M.S. and the A.D.S.A., Chairman of the Committee on Graduate Education of the A.A.O.M.S., and a Founding Fellow of the International Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. He was involved in the development of guidelines for specialty training in Oral Surgery and in the “Guidelines for Teaching the Comprehensive Control of Pain and Anxiety in Dentistry.”

In 1963 Morgan Allison received the Heidbrink Award in recognition of his accomplishments in Anesthesiology in Dentistry and Service to the American Dental Society of Anesthesiology. He has recently received the “Distinguished Alumnus” Award of the Ohio State University Dental Alumni Association, the Ohio Dental Association’s “Distinguished Dentist Award”... “in recognition of long, outstanding and/or unusual service performed voluntarily and of benefit to the profession and community,” and a Citation from the National Council of Psi Omega in recognition of his distinguished service to his Fraternity and Dentistry.

Dr. Allison’s legacy is the group of 76 graduates of his training program who comprise what was formerly known as the Ohio State University Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons and now, in honor of the man affectionately known as “the Chief,” as The Morgan L. Allison Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. Many of these men have worked diligently for organized dentistry and dental education, and in particular for the American Dental Society of Anesthesiology.

When asked to comment on what he considers his greatest accomplishment, this totally unselfish man who is genuinely more concerned with progress of others rather than his own responded, “I think it has been my ability to select outstanding students and to motivate them and work with them in the development of their lives. I’ve been lucky at that. I’ve been associated with a fantastic group of people. Most of my students have eventually exceeded me. But wouldn’t it be wrong if they hadn’t.”

Although considerably under six feet in stature, this giant in dental anesthesiology is now Regents Professor Emeritus, retired from his University and from his private practice of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. However, our organization, which he helped found thirty years ago, remains strong and his loyal support has not diminished. What we are today, where we are today, and where we are headed in the future, we owe in large part to a man with great vision, who knows how to inspire others and to get the job done, — our friend and colleague, Morgan L. Allison.

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