

Academy of RV Tucker Study Clubs

RV Tucker Award

Dr Richard G Stevenson



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The word “award” comes from the French origin “warder,” which means to *guard* or the Germanic origin, “warten” meaning *to watch*. The sense one gets from the origins of this word when seen in this context is that it transcends its formal definition *to confer or bestow*. This transcendence could not be more true than with the Richard V Tucker Award, because that,

in a sense, is what this award recognizes in its recipient. One who guards or watches over the integrity of our noble profession of dentistry through dedication and commitment to the ideals embodied by the award’s namesake. The significance of this award is especially important these days, with the ongoing changes we are currently witnessing in our profession where “caveat emptor” rules the day.

No question, Dr Tucker has inspired us with this dedication to the patient and the profession through his tireless commitment to the study club concept and hands-on continuing education. This has benefits to the patient, the dentist and the profession at-large as manifest by the previous recipients of this award. Dr Denny Miya, with his dedication to the Tucker Institute at the University of Washington; Dr Warren Johnson, with his selfless efforts in all the study clubs he mentors and his on-going teaching worldwide; and now, Dr Richard Gray Stevenson III, with his earnest work in formal dental education at the University of California in Los Angeles.

Before I go on to describe Richard’s appreciable accomplishments, accolades and professional endeavors, I would like to take the opportunity to describe him personally.

I have known Rich since the fall of 1982, when we both began our dental education at UCLA. He resided four rooms down the hall from me at the graduate dor-

mitory, Hershey Hall. We immediately became fast friends, as we seemed to share many things in common, but just as many differences portending for a future of long-term contact.

Oh heck, I’ll just say we’re best friends. I can speak for him, because, about a year ago, at this same time, he presented me with the Foil group’s Clinician of the Year Award. I couldn’t believe that he could keep such a straight face with all the bull he fed everyone with his little spiel. So, this year, in a sense, I am returning the favor with the difference that, what I say about him will be the truth.

In all seriousness, I consider Richard a brother. We have been through a lot together in the 26 years that we’ve been friends. I must say that this last year has been the most meaningful to me on many levels. Rich was by my side all the way during my darkest hour, along with my family. He was a stalwart during one of the most trying periods in his own personal life. I believe I am alive today, at least to some extent, because of his inspiring friendship and advice. He truly is the best friend one could hope for, which speaks volumes about him as a human being.

Dr Stevenson earned his bachelor’s degree in General Chemistry from UCLA in 1982, then his dental degree from the same school in 1986. Upon graduation, he started his private practice in Laguna Niguel, where he quickly established himself in the community as an excellence-oriented clinician. In 1992, he commenced his academic career at UCLA, teaching part-time, carefully balancing his time with private practice. In 1994, he left private practice to teach full-time at the UCLA School of Dentistry, where he began with the academic appointment of lecturer in the section of Operative Dentistry. Richard moved quickly up the academic ladder to chairman of the Division of Restorative Dentistry, the largest department in the dental school, where he was appointed as clinical professor.

They say that “some men dream of worthy accomplishments, while others stay awake and do them.” This statement is clearly demonstrated by Richard’s

accolades and contributions to dentistry. To give a few examples, he holds fellowships in medical education at the UCLA School of Medicine, the Pierre Fauchard Academy, the American College of Dentists, the Academy of Dentistry International and the Academy of General Dentistry, as well as earning the Board Certificate from the American Board of Operative Dentistry in 2007. His university committee service is too extensive to list, but suffice to say, he has earned the reputation of being an invaluable asset to the university. As if this was not enough for one human being, he has served as Commander for the US Navy Reserves from 1996-2005. He also holds a black belt in Kempo Karate, which, of course, he has used to give instruction on rape and violent crime defense, among an array of other community service endeavors.

As Gary Player has said, “the harder I work, the luckier I get.” This is why Rich expects luck out of his students. In return, Dr Stevenson, as he is known around school, is both respected and beloved by his students, where his teaching experience has led to several awards. Due to time constraints, I’ll name just a few, which include Faculty of the Year 1994 and 1996, Distinguished Faculty award 1995 and 1999, Most Outstanding Operative Instructor of the Year 1997 and 1998, Pierre Fauchard Academy Teacher of the Year 2001, the Award of Teaching Excellence 2002, and on and on.

Yes, some stars just shine a little brighter. In fact, thankfully for the ARVT, Rich is the ongoing secretary as well as for the AOD, giving credence to the saying, “If you want something done, you give it to a busy person.” As you all know, he is a member of the AAOGFO, AOD, ARVT and AARD. Rich has co-authored several abstracts and peer-reviewed publications as well as numerous instruction manuals and syllabi. Also, he has the reputation as one of the hot lecturers both nation-

ally and internationally. To balance all his theoretical contributions, Rich is also recognized as an outstanding clinician in many areas, including direct and indirect gold procedures, as demonstrated in his many clinical presentations through the years, in the annual meetings of the ARVT and AAOGF. He has uniquely melded the best attributes of the academician with those of the truly talented clinician, benefiting his students and patients alike.

Art and science are in harmony in his hands. Dentistry is truly blessed to have had Rich choose this profession as his own. Although the RV Tucker Award is not given every year, due to its steep criteria embodied by Dr Tucker, this year, there is no one more deserving of the honor than Dr Richard Gray Stevenson III. Please join me in honoring our friend and colleague.

Mark A Cruz

Editor’s Note: Since this is the first time that this award has appeared in *Operative Dentistry*, I am attaching an explanation of the award and how the recipient is selected.

The RV Tucker Award is the highest award that the Academy gives in recognizing an individual who has made a significant impact not only on the Academy, but, more importantly, to the profession as a whole. This is accomplished either through service or education or great impact that reflects the values of Dr Tucker and represents his level or a similar level of impact on the profession. As such, this award is not necessarily given out every year. This award is the responsibility of the president, pending Dr Tucker’s approval, as it carries his name.