

by Cynthia Scanlon

MARK V. DAHL, M.D., has been named this year's recipient of the Master Dermatologist Award from the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD). The award was presented to him at the President's Dinner held March 5 in San Francisco, during the AAD's 64th Annual Meeting.

"The American Academy of Dermatology is really a wonderful organization," Dr. Dahl said. "The organization makes the environment for dermatology and the care for patients so much better; I've enjoyed working with an amazing collection of talented people over the years, who are bright, hard working, and have the interests of the specialty and our patients at heart. Being named Master Dermatologist is a great honor."

Dr. Dahl is currently professor of dermatology at the Mayo College of Medicine and chairman of the Department of Dermatology at Mayo Clinic Arizona. Dr. Dahl's research focuses on immunology and infections and inflammatory diseases of the skin, which include studies related to immunodeficiency, chemotaxis, granuloma annulare, immunofluorescence, bullous diseases, psoriasis, cutaneous irritation, allergy, rosacea, and the epidermal acetylcholine network, as well as the immunology of fungal infections.

In 1964, Dr. Dahl received his B.A. from Wesleyan University and then entered medical school at the University of Minnesota Medical School, thinking he would train to be a pediatrician. However, a dermatologist at the school took an interest in Dr. Dahl, convincing him that the field of dermatology held great promise and great challenge. Dr. Dahl was hooked. After grad-

uating from medical school in 1968, Dr. Dahl spent time as an intern at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, and, in 1969, moved to Copenhagen, Denmark, where he completed a fellowship studying mast cells and photobiology under the guidance of Professor Gustav Asboe-Hansen.

Then in the early seventies, Dr. Dahl met a colleague and collaborator who would give his career direction and momentum. While serving as a Research Associate in Dermatology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., Dr. Dahl began a professional collaboration with Stephen I. Katz, M.D., Ph.D. — who was named a Master Dermatologist in 2005. The two began earnest research studying bullous diseases and immunopathology. "In the early seventies, immunology was a new field," Dr. Dahl noted. "There was very little known about it, and, in fact, I had only three weeks of immunology training in medical school." Still, the area of immunology interested Dr. Dahl, particularly as it related to skin disorders and diseases. The two men set out to prove a connection between the two. "Dr. Katz and I realized that inflammation and immunology had to do with a huge number of skin diseases," said Dr. Dahl. "So the two of us attended night classes together on immunology at the National Institutes of Health to gain further training." They did indeed prove a connection, and their groundbreaking research was published in numerous medical and research publications.

During this time, Dr. Dahl also worked with William Jordan, M.D.,

studying the causes of allergic contact dermatitis. After completing his training in dermatology at the University of California-San Francisco Medical Center, Dr. Dahl joined the Department of Dermatology at the University of Minnesota in 1974, becoming professor and then chairman of the department.

Dr. Dahl became president of the American Academy of Dermatology in 1993, and began immediately concentrating on the numerous political and social issues impacting the field of dermatology. For instance, when the Clinton Health Care plan was unveiled, Dr. Dahl worked to influence the direction of the plan. "I prepared a response to the plan, summarizing it to Academy members, analyzing key elements, and providing talking points for dermatologists to influence public opinion and other leaders," Dr. Dahl said. While president, he also grew the Academy's Washington Office into new building space and strengthened the role of the Academy's Advisory Council (now known as the Advisory Board).

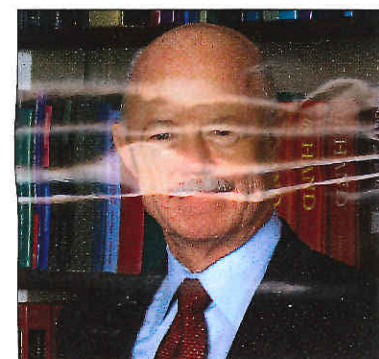
During this time, Dr. Dahl also established the World Congress Scholarship fund, which provides scholarships to young foreign dermatologists who wish to attend AAD meetings. The scholarship program, which is currently funded for \$1 million a year, also provides scholarships for young U.S. and Canadian dermatologists to attend selected world meetings, such as the World Congress.

In 2000, Dr. Dahl joined the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Ariz. During the past 10 years, particularly the past few years, Dr. Dahl's research has focused on rosacea.

"For the past 10 years, rosacea has been my prime interest," Dr. Dahl said. "It's a mysterious disorder." His current research has focused on why pimple-like bumps appear in rosacea and whether or not skin temperature plays a role. It occurred to him that perhaps bacteria on the face may be a different strain than the normal bacteria on the skin because bacteria live at a higher skin temperature. This is due to the increased blood flow through rosacea-affected skin. His research proved correct. "Also when you culture the different temperatures, they make different proteins," he said.

In addition to his significant, and often landmark, research, perhaps one of Dr. Dahl's greatest achievements is founding the AAD's Camp Discovery, a camp in Crosslake, Minn., designed for children suffering from skin disorders. Founded in 1993, Camp Discovery gives children with skin diseases a place where they can be kids, have an engaging camping experience, and meet other kids with skin conditions, all without the fear of ridicule or isolation. "The kids have a great time, and they go home different people," Dr. Dahl said. Doctors and residents from all over the nation attend the camp as volunteers, an experience Dr. Dahl says "energizes" them when they return to their own patients. "They see their own patients as real people who are suffering and need their help," he said (see article p. 12).

Over the years, Dr. Dahl has participated in the training of more than 140 residents. His book, *Clinical Immunodermatology*, is in its third printing and



Mark V. Dahl, M.D.

has been read by residents and dermatologists throughout the world. Additionally, Dr. Dahl has written or edited five other books and authored or co-authored more than 250 publications.

He has also been vice president of the Society for Investigative Dermatology and president of both the American Dermatologic Society for Allergy and Immunology and the Minnesota Dermatological Society. He has served on the Boards of Directors of the American Academy of Dermatology, Society for Investigative Dermatology, American Dermatologic Society for Allergy and Immunology, and the Women's Dermatological Society.

He was editor of *Current Concepts of Skin Diseases* and served on the editorial boards of the *Archives of Dermatology*, the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, the *International Journal of Dermatology*, *Advances in Dermatology*, *Current Opinion in Dermatology*, and *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

In summing up his wide-reaching career as a dermatologist so far, Dr. Dahl said, "I did what I liked doing. The whole ride has been amazing and fun." •