

In Memoriam

Sebastian G. Ciancio, DDS, MS (1937-2020)

Periodontology lost another giant in our field this past October when Sebastian Ciancio passed away. Seb was a true leader in our field and his impact on the profession was immeasurable. He was recognized worldwide for his expertise in research and clinical applications of Periodontology and Pharmacology. Most importantly, he was a teacher and scholar and he had an enormous impact on the career paths of many future scientists and periodontists, including me. I think I speak for every one of us when I say that we are deeply indebted to Seb for his caring and support that went well beyond the classroom and continued to influence us throughout our lives. He was a Distinguished Service Professor and Chairman in the Department of Periodontics and Endodontics and the Director of the Center for Dental Studies at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo. He also held the position of Clinical Professor in the Department of Pharmacology at University at Buffalo. He served in many consulting roles throughout his career, most notably as Consultant for the Veterans Administration Medical Center and the Erie County Medical Center.



A graduate of the School of Dentistry at SUNY Buffalo, Seb went on to complete an NIH Research Fellowship in the Department of Physiology and Fellowships in Pharmacology and Periodontology at the same university. He also completed postdoctoral training in Biostatistics at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Periodontology at SUNY; Radio-isotope Techniques at Western New York Nuclear Center and Clinical Pharmacology at Vanderbilt University.

In addition to his service to IAP, where he was President from 2009-2011, Seb took on leadership roles and was an active member of many professional organizations; He served as consultant and co-chair of the Council on Scientific Affairs of the American Dental Association, President of the American Academy of Periodontology, President of the American Academy of Periodontology Foundation and Director of the annual Chautauqua Dental Congress. He was also a member of the International and American Association for Dental Research and the Federation Dentaire Internationale. He was a Fellow of the International College of Dentists, and was recognized by the American Academy of Periodontology with the Clinical Research Award, the Presidential Award, and the Gold Medal Award in addition to a Special Citation. He was also recognized with the Norton Ross Award for Clinical Research by the ADA. The list of Seb's honors and awards is too long to list in its entirety.

Seb's contributions to dental science, particularly periodontology and pharmacology, are enormous. He authored or co-authored over 150 publications focusing for the most part on periodontal disease and dental therapeutics. He was co-author of Clinical Pharmacology for the Dental Professional, editor of the ADA guide to Dental Therapeutics and editor of Biological Therapies in Dentistry, a bi-monthly newsletter for dental professionals. He was a consultant for the Journal of Periodontology and The American Journal of Dentistry. One important and lasting accomplishment was his chairmanship of the dental division of the United States Pharmacopoeia, where he established sections on dental considerations for drugs.

Seb's academic contributions were not limited to the laboratory and clinic. His impact on students was enormous; he trained many of the academic leaders of today. He mentored numerous students and postdoctoral fellows over the years. His quest for knowledge was tireless, and his energy and ethics were transferred to his mentees. He was Chair of the Department of Periodontology and Endodontics at Buffalo for 35 years and led that department to greatness. He was a SUNY Distinguished Service Professor.

With all his honors, awards and his impact on our profession, Seb was most proud of his family. He and Marilyn were married for 57 years and Seb delighted in his children Seb and Michelle, and as years passed, their spouses Jennifer and Pete and his grandchildren.

The impact of Dr. Sebastian G. Ciancio on the field of Periodontology is impossible to quantify. He was one of the earliest contributors to the scientific era of clinical research in periodontology going far beyond descriptive studies and case reports into modern concepts of evaluating treatments for disease. His leadership changed the way we practice. He was a leader in education and science, and he will be missed. Seb was 83.

Thomas E. Van Dyke, DDS, PhD