

Chicago Dental Society's 2018 Honorees Recognized for Outstanding Contributions to the Dental Profession and Community Leadership

Annual awards presented for scientific excellence, charitable care and community impact at 153rd Midwinter Meeting

Chicago (Feb. 22, 2018) – In recognition of their outstanding contributions to the dental profession, the Chicago Dental Society (CDS) honored four individuals for their dedication to academic and scientific excellence, volunteered services and free dental care to underserved patients, and promoting awareness of the impact of oral health on overall health. CDS members and associate members Dr. Darryll Beard, Dr. Edwin “Ted” Parks, Prof. Gail Williamson and Dr. Wanda Laszcz were presented with the Cushing, Christensen Lecturer Recognition Awards, and CDS Foundation (CDSF) Vision Award during the opening session of CDS’ annual Midwinter Meeting at McCormick Place West.

“As leaders in the scientific and academic communities, Dr. Beard, Dr. Parks and Prof. Williamson exemplify the qualities we honor with these awards,” said CDS Board President Dr. Lou Imburgia. “We thank them for their dedication to our profession, to training students and new dentists, and for consistently serving patients with the best possible dental care.”

CDSF Chair Dr. Pat Hann described the Foundation’s choice for its Vision Award, honoring outstanding volunteer achievement. “We can’t think of someone more deserving of the Vision Award than Dr. Wanda Laszcz, who tirelessly finds new ways to educate children and families about the importance of good oral health,” said Hann. “As a natural teacher, she inspires staff and students at the Infant Welfare Society Clinic to learn the importance of good dentistry and of treating patients with compassion.”

The **George H. Cushing Award** honors individuals who raise public awareness about oral health issues.

Honoree: Dr. Darryll L. Beard, associate member of the Chicago Dental Society, former president of the Illinois State Dental Society, 2017 Fellow of the International Dental Implant Association, and 9-year delegate for the American Dental Association. Beard has helped lead and organize several events providing free dental services to the underserved, participating in a Garg Foundation modern dentistry mission to the Dominican Republic, and the 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 Illinois Mission of Mercy events.

The **Gordon J. Christensen Lecturer Recognition Awards** is named in honor of Dr. Christensen’s many outstanding contributions to dentistry and the Midwinter Meeting.

Honoree: Dr. Edwin “Ted” Parks is a recently retired professor of Dental Diagnostic Sciences in the Department of Oral Pathology, Medicine and Radiology at the Indiana University School of Dentistry in Indianapolis, Indiana. He also serves as Director of Dental Radiology and Course Director for Dental Student Radiology Courses. Parks is a Diplomate of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology and the American Board of Oral Medicine. He has served as Councilor for Public Policy and Scientific Affairs for the American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, and is active in the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

Honoree: Gail F. Williamson is a professor of Dental Diagnostic Sciences in the Department of Oral Pathology, Medicine and Radiology at the Indiana University School of Dentistry in Indianapolis, Indiana. She has also served as Director of Allied Dental Radiology for Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene

Radiology Courses. Williamson is the Associate Executive Director for the American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology and serves as a Radiology expert on the National Board Dental Hygiene Test Construction Committee.

The Parks and Williamson team has been teaching radiography around the country at dental meetings for many years, and have been “fixtures” at the Midwinter meeting for 15 years.

The **CDS Foundation Vision Award** honors dedicated volunteers who generously support access to care programs and dental education for the underserved in their community, and practices the dental profession with integrity, honesty and truthfulness with commitment to protecting public trust.

Honoree: Dr. Wanda Laszcz is the Oral Health Director at the Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society Children’s Clinic in Oak Park, Ill. The clinic provides oral cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealants, extractions, cavity repair, and root canals for 2,800 low-income children a year across 6,700 visits. Under her leadership, the clinic has increased capacity for children with special needs, upgraded the clinic space, and increased coverage by pediatric dentists – and expanded the clinic’s portable dental program to serve 2,300 additional schoolchildren, helping educate students and their families on how to stay healthy through good oral care. She has also established a critical relationship with the University of Illinois School of Dentistry to provide clinical rotations for pediatric residents. Dr. Laszcz also successfully led the effort to obtain grant funding for a pilot project designed to screen dental patients for behavioral health, and provide subsequent referrals to social work.

About the Chicago Dental Society Foundation

Guided by a belief that all families should have access to quality oral healthcare, the CDS Foundation has awarded more than \$1 million to local dental clinics and programs that help get people the dental care they need. CDS members donate funds and time to the Foundation, and those resources are used to improve the public’s access to dental care programs and education. Specifically, the CDS Foundation provides: dental health care to low income residents at the CDS Foundation Clinic; grants to local non-profit organizations that provide access to care, and to the leading dentistry schools at universities in Illinois; programs to increase oral health literacy and access to care in our communities; opportunities for industries to support oral health; and accepts donations that honor or memorialize a loved one as enduring tributes that help further the mission of providing access to care.

About the Chicago Dental Society

Trust a Chicago Dental Society (CDS) dentist with more than just your smile. Talk with them and you’ll see their work is an investment in not just your oral health, but your overall health. They are current on the dental trends and technology through extensive CDS continuing education programs, including the Midwinter Meeting. Ranking among Chicago’s top 20 conventions, CDS’ Midwinter Meeting – one of North America’s largest exhibits of dental products and professional dentistry – typically welcomes approximately 30,000 dental professionals each year, and generates more than \$30 million for the local economy (according to Choose Chicago). The largest local affiliate of the American Dental Association, the non-profit Chicago Dental Society represents dentists across the Chicago region. They’re your neighbors, friends and community anchors. Connect with the Chicago Dental Society at cbs.org, where you’ll find our easy-to-navigate Find a CDS Dentist search tool. Or, connect on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

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