

SIU SDM's Dr. Keith Dickey honored with IU Distinguished Alumni Award

August 9 2018 11:58 AM



ALTON - Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) Director for Continuing Education and Alumni Services Keith W. Dickey, DDS, MBA, has been presented the Indiana University (IU) School of Dental Medicine 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Dickey accepted the award in May during the Indiana Dental Association/IU School of Dentistry Alumni Weekend in French Lick, Ind.

“I never expected to receive this tremendous honor,” Dickey said. “I received this award exactly 44 years to the day of when I graduated from IU with my doctor of dental surgery degree. Graduating in 1974, it truly was a golden age of faculty members who helped mold my teaching experiences for a lifetime.”

After practicing general dentistry for six years post-graduation, Dickey realized through part-time teaching that his true calling was to be a dental educator. After selling his practice, he first directed the Illinois Central College Dental Auxiliary programs in Peoria. Soon thereafter, he moved to Alton to pursue a new opportunity at the SIU SDM.

At the SIU SDM, Dickey taught in the areas of practice management, auxiliary utilization and dental ethics and jurisprudence, and served as chair of the Department of Growth, Development and Structure. He retired as emeritus associate professor in 2009, and is now serving as the School’s director for alumni services and continuing education.

“Working with the Central Illinois Academy of General Dentistry, we continue to achieve the main goal of providing more than 90 hours annually of quality continuing education seminars to dentists and the dental profession within a 250-mile radius of the SIU SDM,” Dickey explained. “Since establishing the SIU SDM Alumni Council more than 10 years ago, we now have more than 1,700 graduates who continue to grow in support of their alma mater.”

Organized dentistry is extremely important to the distinguished alumnus. He has served as Madison District Dental Society President, Illinois State Dental Society Central Western District Trustee, and has succeeded through all the officer chairs to become president in 2007-08 of the Illinois State Dental Society. Most recently he served as president of the Illinois State Dental Society Foundation.

Of his career as a dental educator at SIU SDM, Dickey likens to the title character in the 1934 James Hilton novel “Goodbye Mr. Chips,” who bid farewell to his work as an educator having gained hundreds of “children.”

“My wife Peggy and I have a similar feeling,” Dickey explained. “Since joining the faculty at the Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine, just seven years after the School opened its doors and now nearly four decades later, although we have none of our own, we feel we helped to shape the professional lives of hundreds of young students – just all of them dentists!”

[The SIU School of Dental Medicine](#) students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These

opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.