

## Sommers receives 2017 Shepard Distinguished Service Award

The Midwestern Society of Orthodontists' Board of Directors unanimously selected Dr. Dennis D. Sommers of Minot, North Dakota, as the recipient of the 2017 Earl E. Shepard Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes a member of the MSO who exemplifies the ideals of the



orthodontic profession, community and family. He received the award during the business meeting of the MSO in New Orleans in September.

Dennis attended Wichita State University before receiving his DDS degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry in 1975. He continued his orthodontic education at UMKC studying under the guidance of Drs. Victor Drumm Bowles and brothers, H.E (Gene) and Don Thompson, among others and received his Certificate in Orthodontics in 1977. Upon graduation, Dennis began private practice in Minot, North Dakota. He was joined in practice by Dr. Tyler Prestwich in 2015.

Introduction into leadership came three months into practice when he was elected president of North Dakota's Northwest District Dental Society. He served in this and other local and regional dental society positions for the next two and a half decades, later becoming Trustee and eventual president of the North Dakota Dental Association in 2009. He was chosen as the NDDA's Guest of Honor during its 2016 Annual Session. At other times he organized annual Children's Dental Health Month activities, arranged local dental meetings, served as the NDDA's first treasurer in addition to being the NDDPAC Grassroots Chair for twelve years. He volunteered for more than 30 years with the Minot Cleft Palate Team and participated in Mission of Mercy projects in North Dakota and western Minnesota.

Similarly, Dennis served a number of years as president of the North Dakota Society of Orthodontists before completing eight years as its Director to the MSO and later as MSO's representative on the AAO Council on Membership, Ethics and Judicial Concerns. He has served in both AAO and ADA Houses of Delegates, lobbied before the North Dakota Legislature and in Washington, D.C. regarding dental issues with both ADA and AAO Leadership Conferences, filling in gaps with occasional AAO committees and task forces and lecturing to North Dakota groups on various topics, including orthodontics and dental ethics.

Away from dentistry, Dennis has worked on numerous Lions Club, PTA and church committees. As one of its Melvin Jones Fellows, he coordinated the Minot Lions Club's annual LobsterFest fund-raiser during its initial thirteen years of existence. An activity for which he is particularly grateful has been the opportunity to perform with the Minot Symphony Orchestra as a violinist during 40 seasons.

In his spare time Dennis enjoys violin, leisure activities at the lake and writing stories, often laced with humor. He and his wife, Rita (the Executive Director of North Dakota's Board of Dental Examiners), frequently enjoy dental discussions over dinner as well as participation in legislative and other activities, which they hope has favorably influenced dentistry in North Dakota, the MSO and beyond. They take their greatest pride and enjoyment in their four children, Danielle, Nicole, David and Jayne along with their three grandchildren, Maeve, Micah and Quinn.

Congratulations to Dennis for all of his activities, which exemplify the ideals of the orthodontic profession, community and family.