D. Walter Cohen: An iconic icon

By David L. Hoexter, DMD, FACD, FICD, Editor in Chief

The American Academy of Periodontology will dedicate its annual meeting this year to Dr. D. Walter Cohen at a ceremony in Philadelphia on Sept. 29. This honor is more than well deserved and prompted me to remember the column I wrote about Dr. Cohen in the March 2010 Dental Tribune. Dr. Cohen recently spent time again coordinating the dental schools in Jerusalem, with the apparent theme, “Education to Peace.” I hope you are able to attend the AAP meeting and the ceremony honoring this remarkable individual and friend. Enjoy the column once again.

Each generation has a different concept of what makes an icon of dentistry. D. Walter Cohen is such an icon. He is a pinnacle of energy and accomplishment with a glitter of shared knowledge that people learn and share knowledge. He even manages to open eyes and ears that have been waxed shut through years of prejudice and ignorance. When I asked Cohen what he saw as his greatest achievement, he hastily replied, “my family.”

Cohen supports. Photo/Provided by Dr. David L. Hoexter

AAP meeting honors Dr. D. Walter Cohen

The program guide for the 2013 American Academy of Periodontology annual meeting opens with the statement, “This year’s Annual Meeting is dedicated to Dr. D. Walter Cohen, world-renowned periodontist who has dedicated his life to the specialty.”

A full page is then used to list a few of the many highlights in Cohen’s storied career, including his role in establishing the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine’s department of periodontics and serving the school as a professor, associate dean and, ultimately, dean.

The tribute closes with references to some of Cohen's more recent educational activities and concludes with this update: Dr. Cohen currently serves as professor emeritus and dean emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. He continues to practice periodontics in Philadelphia, in the same practice his father, Abram, began 50 years ago.

The AAP Foundation Signature Recognition Event and Awards Ceremony, in honor of Dr. D. Walter Cohen, is Sept. 29 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The ticketed event helps support the AAP Foundation’s education and research activities.

(Source: AAP)