

Marshall receives 2006 Shepard Award

Dr. Kenneth C. Marshall, professor and chairman emeritus of the St. Louis University department of orthodontics, was honored for a career which spanned more than four decades and was instrumental in establishment of St. Louis University's renowned graduate orthodontic program.



Born and raised in Maplewood, Missouri, Dr. Marshall received his dental training at Washington University in St. Louis. Following World War II service in the U.S. Army Dental Corps, he earned his master's of dentistry degree in orthodontics at the University of Michigan. While there, through a fellowship with the Michigan Public Health Department, he established a public school orthodontic program in Sturgis, Michigan.

In 1947, after initially accepting a clinical instructor appointment at Washington University, Dr. Marshall was asked by St. Louis University to chair its new Dental School undergraduate orthodontic department, with the opportunity to help establish a graduate orthodontic department modeled after the University of Michigan program. After obtaining his release from Washington University, he began teaching at St. Louis University half-time, which enabled him to open a private practice in St. Louis County. A year later, the first class was accepted in the new graduate orthodontic school, which was incorporated in the university's graduate department and conferred degrees carrying full academic value for advancement to further degrees.

After considerable research, the decision was made to develop a strong clinical program, integrated with the curriculum of the graduate orthodontic school. Several outstanding clinical orthodontists, including Drs. Charles Tweed, Cope Sheldon, Robert Strang, Cecil Steiner, Walter Winter, Harold Kesling and Sam Lewis, agreed to serve as visiting professors. The program was supplemented by an annual two-week course directed by Dr. Lewis which was a prerequisite for the Charles H. Tweed Foundation course given each summer in Arizona and focusing on the Tweed orthodontic technique taught at St. Louis University. For many years, 25 to 50 practicing orthodontists were attracted to St. Louis for Dr. Lewis' course and, as a result, became strong supporters of the St. Louis University graduate orthodontic program.

Through the years, the St. Louis University graduate orthodontic department attained national prominence. In 1967, however, budgetary concerns prompted a newly appointed university board to announce plans to close the Dental School, along with its graduate departments. Dr. Marshall began a grassroots campaign to save the orthodontic department by contacting every graduate of the program. With support from the alumni and financial pledges from members of the American Association of Orthodontists, sufficient funds were raised to persuade the university board and president, in 1968, to allow the graduate orthodontic program to continue as long as it was self-sufficient and to expand by taking over 16,000 square feet of space in the Dental School.

As a result of the efforts of Dr. Marshall, his colleagues, and succeeding generations of educators and orthodontic professionals, the program has continued to flourish, and St. Louis University has earned a worldwide reputation defined by the achievements of its graduates and the many research awards it has received. The program is now housed in its own multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art facility in the Dreiling-Marshall Hall on the campus of the St. Louis University Medical Center.

During his career, Dr. Marshall received a number of honors, including achievement awards from alumni associations of Washington University and the University of Michigan; and the Gold Medal Award of the Greater St. Louis Dental Society.

Dr. Marshall retired as St. Louis University orthodontic department chairman in 1976 but continued to teach in the clinic until the mid-1980s. He maintained his St. Louis County private practice for 40 years until selling it in 1987 and moving to his farm in Grubville, Missouri.

Dr. Marshall and his wife Helen have been married for 65 years and have two daughters, a son, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Congratulations, Ken! You have been a true shining light in the orthodontic profession.