

MOMENTUM

News & Viewpoints for Eastman Dental Center Alumni & Friends

Spring 1994

Trustees Appoint Ronald J. Billings, Director; Eastman Dental Center Heads into its 80th Year

"It's hard to imagine an individual with broader experience. He is a productive researcher, committed educator and experienced clinical administrator."

*---Louis A. Langie, Jr.
Board of Trustees, President*

On March 22, 1994 the Board of Trustees of Eastman Dental Center unanimously voted to appoint Ronald J. Billings, DDS, MSD to the position of Director, the fourth Director in the Center's history.

In the ten years that Dr. Billings has been at the Eastman Dental Center, he had a variety of experiences. In 1984, Dr. Dennis Leverett recruited him as Assistant Chair, Community Dentistry, and a decade or so later, Dr. Billings was appointed Director.

Between these two appointments, Dr. Billings served as Associate Director for Clinical Affairs (1989-93), Acting Chair, Department of Pediatric Dentistry (1990-92), Acting Chair, Community

Dentistry (1993-94). Whatever the title, Dr. Billings has continued to be an active and distinguished investigator.

As Associate Director of Clinical Affairs, he created and staffed the first Clinical Affairs office in the Center's history and was the architect of the Quality Assurance Plan. This plan is unique to the Center and since its full implementation, the Dental Center received a "no citation visit" from the New York State Health Department last December.

His experience extends beyond the clinical into the research and educational arenas.

"Dr. Billings is highly respected by his colleagues at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry," Dean Marshall A. Litchman said. "His appointment insures that we will enhance our long standing relationship in graduate education and research."

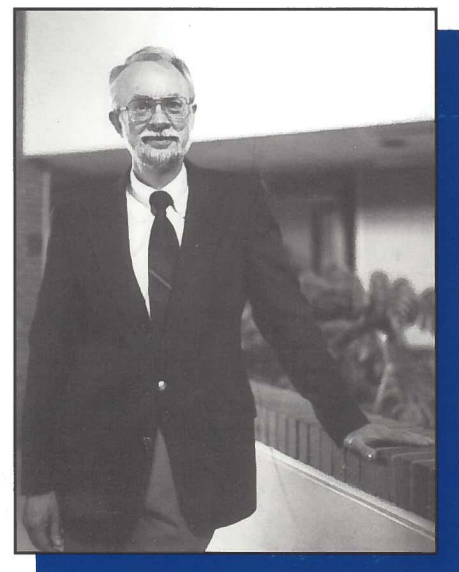
A distinguished investigator, Dr. Billings is the recipient of numerous National Institute of Dental Research and commercial grants. NIDR recently re-

newed his \$1.3 million Caries Risk Assessment grant for an additional four years.

He received his DDS and MSD in Preventive Dentistry from Indiana University, Indianapolis, and completed a National Institutes of Health, Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program in Cariology at the University of Minnesota, School of Dentistry, Minneapolis.

He has been a member of the faculties

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Ronald J. Billings

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of Indiana University School of Dentistry (1971-76), University of Minnesota School of Dentistry (1976-80) and the University of Texas, Dental Branch (1980-84). It was while he was in Texas that Dr. Billings met his wife Renate

Nursing from the University of Rochester School of Nursing (1988). She is currently a Clinical Nurse Specialist/ Nurse Practitioner in the Intermediate Care Unit of Rochester General Hospital. Ironically, she was a Dental Assistant in Stuttgart, West Germany, prior to earning her RN from Toronto's Humber College in 1977.

Dr. Billings' extensive experience in the three facets of the Dental Center—research, education and clinical care, makes him a fitting choice for the Director's chair.



From Left to Right: Louis A. Langie, Jr., Board of Trustees President, Renate Billings, Dr. Ronald J. Billings and Dr. Wilfred A. Springer, Board Member and Former Acting Director.

Porsche. In between the stresses of their two successful careers, the two have shared an 11 year marriage.

"Ron is extremely proud of his association with the Center and works hard to insure the Center is equally proud of him. He is a true morning person. Many times he rises at three or four in the morning to complete work before leaving for the Center at 7:00 AM. In fact, I understand it is a joke among some employees that when they have a phone mail message left at 4 AM they automatically know the following voice will be Ron's." Mrs. Billings explains.

Mrs. Billings is a Nurse Practitioner with a masters degree in Medical Surgical

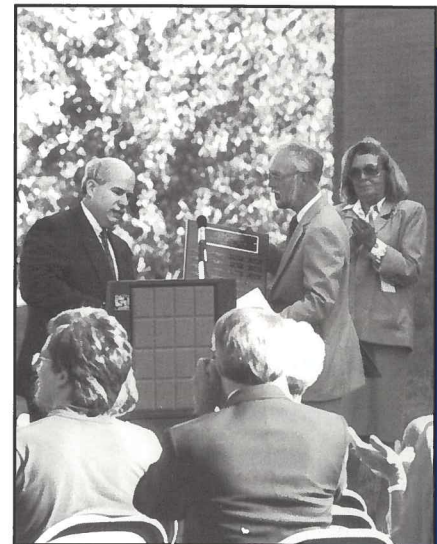
However, Dr. Billings brings more to this position than just experience. His friendliness and concern for all who work at the Dental Center is legend. Although considered by most to be a quiet individual, he regularly goes out of his way to say "hello" and spend time talking to faculty and staff about their day.

Throughout his ten year career at the Center, Dr. Billings has diligently served as Director of the Mobile Dental Health Program or Smilemobile as it is commonly known. This program was designed to provide needed dental

services to children who might not normally receive them. Under his direction this program has grown from one unit serving fewer than 1,000 children in four schools and various day care centers to two units serving over 3,000 children throughout Rochester and its surrounding areas.

Dr. Billings is an individual eager to share ideas. His open door policy is evidenced by his philosophy on leadership.

"No one leads alone," he said. "No mat-



Left to Right: Board of Trustee Vice-President, Howard Berman, Dr. Ronald Billings and Mrs. Richard U. Wilson, Immediate Past President, dedicate the second Smilemobile in September of 1991.

ter how skilled or experienced -- ultimately leaders can only be as successful as the people they gather around them."

"I look forward to being part of the TEAM to lead Eastman Dental Center into the 21st Century."

What Lies Ahead?

A first look at a vision for the future

On Friday, March 18, the Search Committee asked Ron Billings if he would agree to be a candidate. On Tuesday, March 22, Dr. Ronald J. Billings stood in the Farash Auditorium and was introduced by the President of the Board of Trustees as the new Director of the Eastman Dental Center. Dr. Billings addressed members of the Dental Center community with poise and confidence and discussed his vision for the future.

At the Trustee meeting on April 12, he had refined his thinking, but the basic message remained the same. "My general philosophical objectives are threefold: To develop a team-driven corporate culture; to develop a reward system which promotes cooperation; and to foster a "service first" philosophy toward our customers, e.g., our patients and our students." Dr. Billings stated that this must be accomplished within the framework of fiscal responsibility and of financial independence.

Dr. Billings' more specific and immediate goals are to appoint search committees for the open senior faculty positions. The chair of Community Dentistry is vacant and Dr. Stanley Handelman, General Dentistry Chair, will retire in June. Dr. J. Daniel Subtelny, chair of

the Department of Orthodontics has retired, but graciously agreed to act as Chair while a search for his successor is held.

The trustees were told that an external review of the Center's organization and administrative structure will be initiated. This review will ensure that the Center has the flexibility to be competitive for patients, residents, faculty and research opportunities and to be rapidly responsive to changing conditions in our environment.

"I believe passionately that we have the resources to achieve even more than we achieved in the first eighty years of our existence - but to realize these achievements we must have the will and the drive and the commitment to succeed."

*--Ronald J. Billings,
upon accepting the appointment*

Dr. Billings views his new position as one of leadership, which entails providing direction, challenge and inspiration. He also believes that his success or failure as a director is dependent upon the members of the Dental Center community; faculty, staff, students and alumni. "No matter how skilled or experienced, leaders can only be as successful as the

people they gather around them," said Dr. Billings.

During the first 20 days of his administration, Dr. Billings has met with virtually all full-time and many part-time members of the Eastman Dental Center faculty and appropriate University of Rochester faculty. He has met with EDC managers and chaired his first Institutional Operations Committee meeting and first Senior Staff Executive Committee meeting.

"I plan to convene the EDC/University Educational Committee to discuss closer interaction and cooperative arrangements, especially regarding the Dentist Scientist Award program. A review of the research activities will be the first step in the development of a unified research plan in cooperation with the University of Rochester."

In the area of patient care, Dr. Billings says he will examine the format within which care is delivered. "We must begin to develop strategies for enhancing how patients are processed and cared for within and between services and develop business plans for each Dental Center service with emphasis on compassion-

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ate, service-first care, delivered in an efficient and productive manner.”

Hours after his appointment, Dr. Billings asked the Dental Center audience for their help and their counsel and proposed the following five goals to work toward.

1. *Maintain and improve our recognition as a leading post-graduate educational institution with much sought-after graduates.*
2. *Nurture and improve the valuable research character of our institution.*
3. *Become recognized as a premiere Center for primary and tertiary patient care and to be perceived as a valuable resource to our peers and colleagues in the community.*
4. *Recruit and retain the most outstanding faculty, residents and staff possible.*
5. *Maintain the character and quality of our facilities.*

Today, Dr. Ronald J. Billings assumes the important task of leading the Center into the 21st Century. His vision will shape the path of the next era of EDC's history.

A Tribute to an Eastman Legend

Dr. Basil G. Bibby was Director of Eastman Dental Center from 1947-70. During his tenure, graduate programs in Pediatric Dentistry, Periodontology, Prosthodontics and General Dentistry were established. A significant number of “his” graduates went on to play leading roles in dental research and education. His style was facilitative and pragmatic. He regarded each person, regardless of his or her credentials, important and unique. He inspired students and faculty to perform at higher levels than they might otherwise have done. Imagination flourished during Dr. Bibby's tenure. This spirit continued among students and faculty long after their departure from the Dental Center making them extended members of the Dental Center family to this day.

October 6, 1994 is the 90th birthday of Dr. Bibby and it is fitting and proper that we celebrate the life of this great man with a two-day event combining academic meetings and social events.

The title of the meeting is Future Direction of Dental Postgraduate Education: A Tribute to Basil G. Bibby on his 90th Birthday. The first day of the conference includes a review of Dr. Bibby's contribution to dental education and

topics and issues of critical importance to the future of postgraduate dental education.

Saturday will include workshops and a panel discussion. The panel will include distinguished graduates of Eastman Dental Center who are leaders in dental education. On Saturday evening, a dinner in Dr. Bibby's honor will present an opportunity for personal reminiscences and accolades. Other events are in the planning process.

**Mark your calendars for
Friday and Saturday,
October 14-15, 1994.**

Detailed information and reservation forms will be sent to you in mid-May. If you have suggestions of non-alumni who would want to pay tribute to Dr. Bibby by attending the celebration, please write, phone or FAX us:

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A Legacy of Leadership

Dr. Billings follows in the footsteps of three distinguished leaders. Each were recognized by the national and international dental community for their individual strengths and each raised Eastman Dental Center to new heights.

Harvey J. Burkhart was the first director of The Rochester Dental Dispensary (it was given its present name in 1965). He gathered an impressive staff and the dispensary became a model for patient care. George Eastman, founder of the Dispensary, was so impressed with its operation, he asked Dr. Burkhart to supervise setting up similar Eastman clinics in Stockholm, Brussels, Paris, London and Rome.

As a member of the Federation Dentaire Internationale, after World War II, he was called upon by world dentistry to help revive that organization after the war's devastation. This accomplishment remains his greatest legacy. During his lifetime, Dr. Burkhart was honored by many foreign governments and remains prominent in the history of the dental profession.

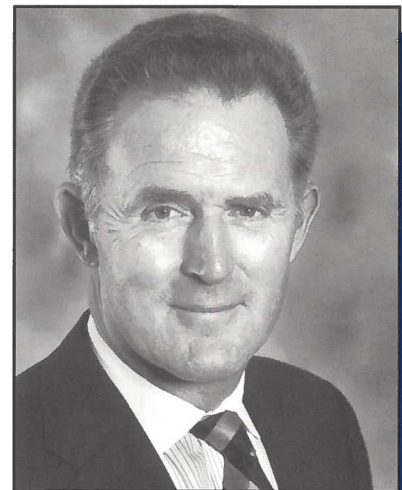


Dr. Basil G. Bibby, (1947 -1970)

Dr. Basil G. Bibby was appointed director in 1947. Under his leadership, specialty education and research programs were developed. Adults as well as children were accepted for treatment and the institution's national and international reputation flourished. Dr. Bibby is known as the father of modern dentistry

for his many scientific contributions to the knowledge of oral health.

Dr. Bibby is credited with being the first to prove that fluoride reactions with the enamel surface would prevent caries. He advanced knowledge about the role of oral bacteria, and also pioneered research into the cariogenicity of foods. After retiring in 1970, Dr. Bibby remained an active researcher at the Dental Center until 1988 and continued to publish his findings until 1991.



Dr. William D. McHugh, (1970 - 1993)

Dr. William D. McHugh became Eastman Dental Center's third director in 1970. During his tenure Dr. McHugh was known for his brilliant record as a leader of many dental organizations, in-



Dr. Harvey Burkhart, (1915 - 1947)

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cluding the American Association of Dental Research, and the International Association of Dental Research. In addition to serving as Chair for several National Institutes of Health committees, he also served as panel leader of an NIH Consensus Conference, a prestigious appointment in scientific circles.

Dr. McHugh was instrumental in the Center's move to its current location. The architecturally acclaimed building replaced the original building, long out-

dated, which Dr. Burkhart built on Main Street in 1915. During the twenty three years of Dr. McHugh's directorship, he nurtured and advanced the educational, research and patient care goals of the institution.

In the history of the Center, there have been three Acting Directors. Benjamin L. Wonder, Business Superintendent of the Dispensary, served as Acting Director after Dr. Burkhart died in 1946, until Dr. Bibby was appointed in 1947. Dr. Dennis Leverett, Chair of Community

Dentistry for 20 years, was Acting Director from November, 1992 until his retirement in December of 1993. Dr. Wilfred A. Springer, a retired dentist and long time trustee, stepped in until Dr. Billings was appointed.

Today, Eastman Dental Center enters a new era with a new leader and a contemporary vision. This vision is built upon nearly 80 years of history but sensitive to the needs of the times. The "Billings era" is now being added to the rich fabric of the Center's tapestry.



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