



IN MEMORIAM

Sebastian G. Ciano, DDS



1937-2020

Sebastian G. Ciano, DDS, a State University of New York (SUNY) Distinguished Service Professor and former chair of the Department of Periodontology and Endodontics at the University at Buffalo (UB) School of Dental Medicine, passed away on October 17, 2020. He is survived by Marilyn, his wife of 57 years; his children, Michele Bessinger and Sebastian J. Ciano; and four grandchildren.

Born in Jamestown, New York, Seb graduated from the School of Dentistry at UB. After serving in the US Army, he completed a National Institutes of Health Research Fellowship in Pharmacology and Periodontology with the Department of Physiology and Fellowships at UB. He also performed postdoctoral work in biostatistics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, radioisotope techniques at Western New York Nuclear Service Center, and clinical pharmacology at Vanderbilt University.

Seb joined the UB School of Dental Medicine in 1964 as an instructor in periodontology. He also served as clinical associate professor in the UB Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, and as a consultant for the Buffalo Veterans Administration Medical Center and Erie County Medical Center. He also acted as chair of the Department of Periodontics and Endodontics at UB for 35 years, a record for the SUNY system.

During his tenure at UB, Seb emerged as one of the world's leading figures in periodontology and dental pharmacology. He published more than 150 peer-reviewed papers, wrote more than 25 books and book chapters—including the *ADA Guide to Dental Therapeutics* and *Clinical Pharmacology for Dental Professionals*—held two patents, and served on numerous editorial boards and professional committees.

In addition to his work at UB, Seb served the global dental profession as president of both the American Academy of Periodontology and the International Academy of Periodontology, and as executive director of the Task Force on Design and Analysis in Oral Health Research. He served as president of the Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Therapeutics Group of the International and American Association of Dental Research (IADR). He also acted as chair of the dental division of the US Pharmacopoeia, where he established sections on the oral health effects of prescription drugs.

Seb was very active throughout his career in periodontal and other clinical dental research. As the founder and director of the Center for Dental Studies at UB, he conducted numerous clinical trials and human studies. He was one of the first dentists to characterize the efficacy of antibiotics in periodontal therapy, and he developed strategies for subgingival irrigation, local anesthesia, use of baking soda, and electric toothbrushes. He also studied twins to assess the role of genetics in periodontal conditions. His work resulted in widespread recognition, and he received numerous national and international awards and honors over the course of his career. These included a fellowship with the International College of Dentists; the Gies Foundation Award in Periodontics; a Special Citation, as well as Clinical Research, Presidential, and Gold Medal Awards, from the American Academy of Periodontology; the Jarvie-Burkhart Award from the Dental Society of the State of New York; the Distinguished Service Award from the US Pharmacopoeia; the Hirschfeld Award in Periodontics from the Northeastern Society of Periodontists; the Distinguished Scientist Award in Pharmacology from IADR; the Norton Ross Award for Excellence in Clinical Research from the American Dental Association; and, most recently, the Presidential Citation from the American Association for Dental Research.

Given the deep knowledge he gained through his research, Seb was, unsurprisingly, an excellent teacher. His understanding of periodontology and pharmacology—especially pertaining to dental practice—and an engaging lecture style made him a popular lecturer for students, residents, and practicing dentists. He was appreciated around the world for his continuing education



(CE) courses, and he presented many programs throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, as well as in Brazil, Chile, Japan, Australia, Singapore, and Argentina. His encyclopedic knowledge of the “potions, lotions, and pastes” used in dentistry explained why his CE courses were widely attended around the world. For 30 years, he also organized the annual Chautauqua Dental Congress each summer, where dental practitioners came together with UB faculty for CE and camaraderie, and where he could spend time in the area where he grew up.

In addition to his impact on dentistry as a whole, Seb greatly influenced the School of Dental Medicine at UB. He made an indelible impact on his students, colleagues, and the profession. He mentored many of today’s leading figures in research, industry, and academic dentistry. Seb was also the longest serving chair of any department in the history of the SUNY system. He was widely respected by the students, faculty, and other administrators of the school. He was a multitasker. While running several studies at a time through his Center for Dental Studies, he would also

be preparing for one of his many CE courses, writing one or more papers, organizing meetings, staffing his clinics, and treating patients in the faculty practice he managed for almost 50 years. He was truly remarkable.

Seb loved to travel, often with his wife Marilyn, especially to meet and work with his professional colleagues. His lifelong love of learning motivated him to remain engaged in the profession until only a month before his passing. He also collected antique music boxes and loved sports cars.

On a personal note, Seb had a great impact on our professional lives, first as a teacher and later as a faculty colleague and role model. He was always happy to offer his guidance, and we all enjoyed a great many laughs together. He was a fun guy with a great sense of humor. The global periodontal community will greatly miss Seb.

Frank A. Scannapieco, DMD, PhD

Buffalo, NY

Joseph J. Zambon, DDS, PhD

Buffalo, NY