CMA presents major awards, names 38 new senior members during 126th annual meeting

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Résumé : L’Assemblée générale annuelle de l’AMC est toujours marquée par la remise de prix. Cette année, le Prix F.N.G. Starr, le plus grand honneur que l’AMC rend à un membre, a été décerné au Dr Jean Davignon, spécialiste de l’appareil cardiovasculaire à Montréal. La Médaille de service, qui rend hommage aux Canadiens ayant fait un apport considérable aux soins de santé, a été présentée à l’Ernie Baergen, qui vient de prendre sa retraite après avoir été directeur général de l’Association médicale de la Saskatchewan. La Médaille d’honneur, le plus grand hommage que l’AMC rend à un non-médecin, a été remise à titre posthume à Doug Geeke, l’ex-directeur des Communications et relations gouvernementales de l’Association, pour son travail sans relâche au nom de la profession médicale. Par ailleurs, 38 médecins ont été nommés membres émérites de l’AMC.

A vascular medicine specialist from Montreal, a former executive director of the Saskatchewan Medical Association and the CMA’s former director of communications headed the list of award recipients as the association recognized outstanding contributions to Canadian medicine during its 126th annual general meeting in Calgary in August. The annual award presentations, which took place during the installation of the new CMA president, Dr. Richard Kennedy of Calgary, are a highlight of every annual meeting. This year’s ceremony also featured the presentation of senior membership status to 38 physicians from across the country.

Dr. Jean Davignon, the chief of vascular medicine at Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, received the F.N.G. Starr Award, which “represents the highest award that lies within the power of the CMA to bestow upon one of its members.” Sir Frederick Banting, Dr. J.B. Collip and Dr. Charles Best shared the award in 1936, the first year it was presented, marking their discovery of insulin. Among the other former recipients are Dr. Wilder Penfield, Dr. Bruce Chown and Dr. Hans Selye.

Davignon, whose research has won accolades around the world, was born and raised in Montreal and entered medical school at the University of Montreal in 1953, graduating summa cum laude in 1957. He trained in clinical research and internal medicine in Montreal until 1961, when he began a residency in internal medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Later, he was a research assistant at the clinic and a research associate at the Rockefeller Institute, New York, where he studied lipid metabolic disorders. He has been director of the Hyperlipidemia and Atherosclerosis Research Group and External Research Clinics for the Clinical Research Institute of Montreal for many years, and since 1972 has been chief of cardiovascular medicine at the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal.

Throughout his career, Davignon has been interested in lipids, lipoprotein metabolism, atherosclerosis and hyperlipidemia. For more than 25 years he has taught at the Université de Montréal and McGill University on subjects as diverse as nutrition, genetics, pharmacology, semiology, the clinical sciences and peripheral vascular disease. He teaches and supervises research fel-
lows, PhD candidates, medical students, interns and residents, and dietitians.

In 1981 Davignon received the Marcel Piché Award in recognition of his work at the Clinical Research Institute, and was named Expert Clinician in Internal Medicine by the French government. In 1987 the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation named him Canadian Scientist of the Year. He is president-elect of the International Symposium on Atherosclerosis and will take office in 1994. He is a founding member and past president of the Canadian Atherosclerosis Society.

Davignon and his wife have three children.

Dr. Ernie Baergen of Saskatoon was awarded the CMA Medal of Service, which is presented “from time to time to people who have made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the advancement of health care in Canada.” A 1957 graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, Baergen was a member of the university’s first class of medical graduates. He completed his internship at Saskatoon City Hospital and entered general practice in Saskatoon. He was practising during the province’s medicare crisis of 1962, and at that time he became involved in medical politics. In 1966, after 8 years in practice, he became secretary of the CMA’s Saskatchewan division. At the time the division and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan were one organization; during his first year in the position the organization split into two and he became executive director of the newly formed Saskatchewan Medical Association (SMA). He served in that capacity for the next 25 years, until his retirement in March 1992. He nurtured the SMA from its infancy to its current status as a voluntary medical association representing the interests of 85% of the province’s 1500 licensed physicians.

Baergen has also been active as a volunteer, serving on the Board of Directors of the Sherbrooke Community Centre nursing home from 1972 to 1985; he was president of the Saskatchewan Association of Special Care Homes from 1979 to 1980.

Baergen and his wife, Irene, have five daughters.

In 1982, Douglas Geekie was instrumental in establishing the CMA's Medal of Honour, which honours nonphysicians. This year he received the same award posthumously for his lengthy work on behalf of the medical profession. He died Aug. 14, 11 days before he was to receive his award. He was 62.

Geekie, who graduated from the University of Toronto in 1955, first worked for the Ontario Ministry of Health, and in 1958 moved to British Columbia to become executive director of the BC Tuberculosis Society, a post he held until 1966, when he joined the CMA as assistant secretary of public relations. His responsibilities at that time included overseeing the operations of CMAJ and the Canadian Journal of Surgery.

Among his many accomplishments while at the CMA was organization of the exchange of medical delegation tours between Canada and the Peoples Republic of China, which led to the signing of an official medical educational exchange between the two countries. In 1984 he was named director of communications and government relations at the CMA, a post he held until his retirement in 1992.

During his CMA career he lobbied successfully for the Tobacco Products Control Act and was also instrumental in having federal abortion legislation, Bill C-34, defeated. He was also successful in promoting the CMA’s desire to have goods and services tax (GST) legislation revised so that Canadian Medical Protective Association dues would become GST exempt. That move saves the country’s doctors millions of dollars annually. For years he was the CMA’s voice for dozens of reporters across Canada, and developed a well-deserved reputation for answering reporters’ queries accurately and promptly.

He is survived by his wife,
Mary, and three daughters.

The CMA Board of Directors also elected 38 physicians to senior membership in the association. Senior members are nominated by their provincial or territorial divisions, but the nominations must be approved by the CMA. Senior memberships, which are allotted to divisions according to their number of members, mark long-term service to the medical community and public. Some of these presentations were made at the Calgary meeting, although some recipients elected to receive the award during the annual meeting of their CMA division.

The 1993 recipients from British Columbia are Dr. Madeline Chung, Vancouver; Dr. Robert Hill, Vancouver; Dr. Conrad MacKenzie, Vancouver; Dr. J. Robert MacLean, Vancouver; Dr. Raymond March, New Westminster; Dr. Donald McKerricher, Nanaimo; and Dr. Robert Wilson, Vancouver.

Doctors from the Prairie provinces who became senior members were Dr. Harold Baker, Edmonton; Dr. Andrew Cairns, Edmonton; Dr. Ronald Lewis, High Prairie, Alta.; Dr. Bohdan Michalyshyn, Edmonton; Dr. Joseph O’Brien, Edmonton; Dr. Philip Rutter, St. Albert, Alta.; Dr. Harry Emson, Saskatoon; Dr. Oliver Laxdal, Saskatoon; Dr. Georgina Hogg, Winnipeg; and Dr. T. Frank Malcolm, Swan River, Man.

The Ontario physicians honoured were Dr. F. Norman Brown, Ottawa; Dr. Pierre Gaulin, Ottawa; Dr. Geoffrey Isaac, Scarborough; Dr. Leslie Ivan, Ottawa; Dr. Robert Kilborn, Kitchener; Dr. Philip Klotz, Toronto; Dr. Neville Lefcoe, London; Dr. Robert Salter, Toronto; and Dr. James Whitby, London.

Recipients from Quebec were Dr. J. Edwin Coffey, Westmount; Dr. Jean-Claude D’Amours, Quebec City; Dr. Claude Gendron, Montreal; Dr. Jean Guertin, Granby; Dr. Fabien Poulin, Saint-Lambert; Dr. Jacques Sylvestre, Sherbrooke; and Dr. Charles Valiquette, Saint-Jérôme.

New senior members from the Maritimes are Dr. Gordon Ferguson, Fredericton; Dr. Victor McLaughlin, Moncton, NB; Dr. Malcolm Beck, Charlottetown; Dr. Richard Goldbloom, Halifax; and Dr. Gladys MacLeod, Dartmouth, NS.