Dr. John A. Gray III

W.H. Bowen¹

John Gray was elected Fifty-Seventh President of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) at Osaka in 1980. Although his term of office was probably the shortest in the history of our organization, he served with great diligence and distinction for 10 years as executive director of the IADR and American Association for Dental Research (AADR), which revealed the myriad of his significant talents. He was a distinguished scientist with substantial administrative experience.

John received his doctorate in physical chemistry from Yale in 1949 and served at Procter & Gamble for 32 years. Along with colleagues, John played a major role in the development of "Crest." He (with Briner and Francis) published a landmark paper, "Significance of Enamel Remineralization" (*J Dent Res* 1974;53:239–243), which emphasizes the mechanism of the protective action of fluoride; it certainly influenced the plethora of in vitro and in vivo studies of fluoride that flowed in the following decades.

For many years, John had been concerned about how to make the international association more "international," a challenge he met by promoting the inclusion of divisions into the governance of the association. Moreover, he proposed many changes in the constitution when he served as chair of the Constitution Committee. John expressed clearly his understanding of the difficulties on hand in his presidential address: "Our difficulty in the past has been recognizing that not all issues are universal, and we now need to learn how to establish such needs and to interface appropriately with the Divisions." He certainly succeeded. John and his

wife, Marjean, whose presence enhanced many international occasions, deserve great praise and gratitude.

From the earliest days in office, John encountered turbulent times. A short 8 months after he assumed office, he noted at a meeting of the council, "The budget became an all-consuming monster when the audit revealed our deficit problem." It is perhaps worthy of note that our financial reserves amounted to less than \$30,000! Just 12 months later, Dr. Marie Nylen, president of the IADR, was moved to observe, "Much of the credit for these (reported) improvements goes to the Executive Director and his staff. Dr. Gray's success in bringing order to our affairs, as well as his responsiveness and that of the entire Central office to concerns of membership merits recognition."

John faced down many other crises with aplomb: for example, a threat from the British division to withdraw from the association, a retroactive dues increase, and even cancellation of our reservations for our meeting in Las Vegas by the MGM Grand. John was always the consummate professional, and his ability to handle these and other difficulties in a calm and unruffled manner was reassuring.

John was an outstanding administrator, and he certainly helped to lead the associations into their modern era. He introduced an up-to-date communications system; computerized the associations; reorganized the editorial office; introduced commercial exhibits; supported the program, "lunch and learning," at our meetings; expanded the summer research fellowships; and strengthened and expanded our commercial interactions. He fostered relations with the American Dental Association, American Dental Education Association, American College of Dentists, Fédération Dentaire Internationale (FDI), and the European Organization for Caries Research.

In any discussion, John always had the facts on his side and was as forceful or gentle as the occasion demanded. As Goldsmith observed, "Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway, And fools who came to scoff remained to pray."

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One could always be certain that whatever courses of action John proposed, they were made solely with the best interests of the associations in mind. His loyalty and commitment to the members were beyond reproach. He was a person of complete integrity and sound judgment coupled with a gentle sense of humor. "We shall never see his like again." John's passing represents a continuum of

excellence to another generation. The status and prestige of the IADR and AADR are eloquent testimony to John, who unquestionably laid a foundation stone on which they rest today.

We extend our profound condolences to his daughter Joanna Gray Banta, his sons Timothy and Randolph, and their families.