

# NEWS

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\*\*\*Pierce receives Outstanding Teacher Award.

DALLAS--Alan K. Pierce, M.D., is the 1984 recipient of The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School Alumni Association and Faculty Senate Outstanding Teacher Award.

"Teaching is a little like vaudeville," says Pierce, professor and vice chairman, Internal Medicine at the health science center and medical director of the James W. Aston Ambulatory Care Center. "The most important thing to remember is to keep their attention--to make your presentation in as lively a manner as possible, emphasizing the most important points." It's also imperative, says Pierce, to have interaction with the students and to be perceptive to whether they are understanding the material or not. If they are disinterested, it's most likely the fault of the lecturer.

Pierce has consistently won teaching awards at Southwestern Medical School--including this year's, a total of 19. He feels that the role of the teacher is not to teach, but to organize information by importance. "Teachers need to synthesize information derived from a large number of sources including their own experience so that it augments whatever it is they are trying to teach."

Says Virginia Ng, MSIV, "Dr. Pierce really deserves this award. Not only is he an excellent teacher, but he's also a human being. It shows in everything he does." Also important, says Catherine Chow, MSIV, is his ability to teach at all levels.

"All of us are role models for the students," says Pierce. "Through our interactions with students, patients, house staff and each other, we form a demonstration to the student. We must emphasize treating the whole patient--not just the disease, but how the disease process is affecting the patient's life."

Since 1962, Pierce has been on the faculty of Southwestern. "I came here because it offered me an opportunity to work in an outstanding medical school and because of the free interaction and mutual support and cooperation among the faculty and students." He gives much of the credit for this to Dr. Donald Seldin, professor and chairman of Internal Medicine. "Dr. Seldin is a skillful administrator and leader, and as long as we are successful, he lets us run our services in whatever way we feel is most productive."

Pulmonary medicine is Pierce's primary teaching responsibility. His major research areas include infectious diseases of the lung and how the lung combats bacteria. His primary interest is how the lung defends itself against bacteria. His work includes identifying the important features of the lung's defense mechanisms and determining whether each time the bacteria is ingested and killed, whether those same enzymes that spill out from this interaction damage other tissue within the lung.

The new Aston Center will facilitate teaching in a number of ways, says Pierce who assumed directorship Sept. 1.

Even though the population of patients seen by Parkland Memorial Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital is large, rare diseases will still be rare. Because of the increased opportunity for referrals, the Aston Center may attract more variable diseases, affording a greater opportunity for the students.

faculty teaching award - add one

The public, as a whole, is becoming more concerned with health care and its escalating costs. Thus, outpatient medicine is more desirable in many instances. The AACC will provide the opportunity to teach outpatient care in a more efficient manner than has previously been available. Such care is less expensive and its thrust is to do as much as possible for the patient without admitting the patient into the hospital. "This will enable the student to be better prepared for the wave of the future. In addition, many of our departments will have greater stress on preventive medicine particularly as it relates to asymptomatic diseases such as hypertension and glaucoma," says Pierce.

"It's sometimes easier to be people-oriented in an outpatient setting," Pierce explains. "When patients are ill and in the hospital, they are removed from their natural setting, have lost many of their natural defenses and frequently do not present themselves as they would if they were well. Their entire personality structure is changed. It's more difficult to identify with a patient when they are so isolated from their usual life style. Teaching on an outpatient basis helps maintain the concept that this is an individual and that this individual has a life outside his illness and that we are interacting with this patient in a very small part of their life."

To select the awardee, 400 Southwestern graduates were asked to submit nominees of professors who were "most important in their educational experience" here. In addition each faculty member was asked to submit a brief paragraph or two on the nominee of their choice. From the list of nominees, the voting members of the Senate vote by ballot on the professor of their choice.

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