

SDDS Presidents: A History

This Month: Dr. William Jarvie



At the last annual meeting of the New York State Dental Association (NYSDA), Dr. Burton Wasserman received the Jarvie-Burkhart award which recognizes "great service rendered mankind in the field of dentistry." This award is NYSDA's highest honor. After receiving the award and giving his speech on the floor of the House of Delegates, Dr. Wasserman met up with his immediate family who were there to share in his happiness. Sitting on a chair surrounded by family, he held the Jarvie gold medal in hand and shook his head from right to left in amazement, wonder and most of all humbleness on receiving such a momentous and meaningful award.

The William Jarvie Fellowship Gold Medal was first proposed to the Dental Society of the State of New York by Dr. William Jarvie at the 37th Annual Meeting (1905). Dr. Jarvie was President of DSSNY in 1904 and as one of his final acts as outgoing president, he recommended a new membership category, "Fellowship of the DSSNY" (which required a bylaws change). Dr. W.J. Turner (24th President of the SDDS and President of DSSNY in 1905) so eloquently described the Fellowship medal at the 38th Annual Meeting of DSSNY stating that, "...the ennobling character of the great scientific investigators in our profession, and the open-handed way in which they freely give of the result of their labors to the rest of us, adding to our intelligence and skill in practice...those princes among men who for their ability, industry, lovable character, and sterling worth, have risen to the highest pinnacles in our profession, and are held in the greatest esteem and honor by the entire community...If we may be permitted to look for a moment into the distant future, we see a long list of the names of the most eminent men which dentistry has produced; a list upon which it is an honor for any name to be inscribed..." This was a means by which the society could show their appreciation. Dr. Jarvie gave \$1,000 bond for which the interest would fund the award that consisted of a gold medal. (The interest at the time was \$40, however, the medal wound up costing \$50 and Dr. Jarvie replaced the bond with one giving a \$50 annual interest). The steel dies were made by Tiffany & Co. of New York and the medal fabricated out of 18K gold. The medal was presented in a morocco case. A Fellowship committee of five was appointed to nominate awardees. The first fellowship award was bestowed upon

G.V. Black who was tremendously honored by the award.

In 1959 the William Jarvie Fellowship Gold Medal was combined with the Harvey J. Burkhart Memorial Scroll. The Burkhart scroll was established in 1948, named after Harvey Burkhart who was president of the Eight District Dental Society in 1892, 1894, DSSNY in 1895-97 and President of the ADA in 1899 to "honor those individuals who have distinguished themselves in the field of public health". The scroll was awarded six times before it was combined; the 1952 winner was William J. Gies.

William J. Gies M.S., Ph.D. was chairman of the committee on Research of the Dental faculty of the School of Dentistry of Columbia University in 1920 when he conferred with all the undergraduate students of dentistry to decide the feasibility and desirability of "organizing a society, of students, teachers, and benefactors, for the promotion of research in the School of Dentistry." On December 16, 1920 the students unanimously voted to start the society and call it the William Jarvie Society for Dental Research, of the School of Dentistry of Columbia University and William Jarvie was also elected an honorary member. Today the William Jarvie Society is Columbia's Chapter of the American Association of Dental Research (AADR) Student Research Group. The Jarvie Society also publishes the Jarvie Journal annually.

Only four years before in 1916, Dr. William Jarvie was appointed to a Columbia University Dental School committee headed by Dr. William Gies. This committee was tasked to advise the University whether starting a Dental School was advantageous. The Trustees of Columbia where convinced, however, funding was a huge issue. Dr. Jarvie persuaded his brother James an affluent banker to donate \$100,000. Largely due to "The Jarvie Fund" the school was able to be established. James Jarvie only asked that the infirmary room be known as the "The William Jarvie Infirmary." Dr. Jarvie also secured a \$25,000 donation from his son-in-law Mr. Frederick G. Fletcher.

It is fascinating to trace the beginnings of what today is known as Columbia University College of Dental Medicine through Dr. Jarvie. Dr. William Jarvie was clinical professor of Dental Materia Medica and Therapeutics (1907-1916) at a different dental school, the College of Dental and Oral Surgery of New York, which was located on East 34th and 35th Street in NYC. This dental school was incorporated on April 13, 1852 as the New York College of Dental Surgery and was initially located in Syracuse until the school burned down in 1855 and was never rebuilt. On June 3, 1879 the name was changed to the New York State College of Dental Surgery and the trustees decided to

move the school to New York City. In 1904, the College (which still never officially organized) merged with the New York Dental School (another dental school in the area which opened its doors on June 8, 1892) and was renamed the New York College of Dental and Oral Surgery. However, due to some issues with the charter and name (NYUCD back then was called New York College of Dentistry and had felt the name was too similar to theirs, and would be too confusing) on March 17, 1905 the school was once more renamed to College of Dental and Oral Surgery of New York. The school then merged again with Columbia's School of Dentistry on July 1, 1923 and was called the School of Dental and Oral Surgery of Columbia University.

Dr. William Jarvie Jr. was the 11th President of the Second District Dental Society (SDDS) in 1881. He was born in Manchester, England on July 14, 1841. His mother Isabella was born in England and his Father William was born in Scotland. When he was 14 years old he immigrated, along with his parents, to Brooklyn. A year later he apprenticed with Dr. A. A. Wheeler beginning his life long learning of dentistry. After four years, he moved to Boston and studied another 4 years in the office of Dr. W. W. Codman. Afterward, he returned to Brooklyn and became an associate of Dr. Wheeler who died shortly after in 1864. Dr. Jarvie continued practicing. In 1867, he married Miss Amelia Carroll McHenry and had two sons and two daughters. Fourteen years later, he bought a building at the corner of Clinton and Joralemon Street and converted it to a home office.

Dr. Jarvie became involved in organized dentistry in 1862 when he joined the Brooklyn Dental Association. In 1866, he was a delegate to the American Dental Association. When the Brooklyn Dental Association disbanded in 1867, he was part of the group that organized the Brooklyn Society of Dental Science and Art and he was elected their first Corresponding Secretary (an officer position). In 1869, the name was changed to the Brooklyn Dental Society where he went on to be elected President in 1872 and 1900-1904.

He also helped organize the SDDS and was elected its first Recording Secretary. It is interesting to note that there were five elected officer positions when the SDDS first formed on June 2, 1868. Those positions were: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. Dr. Jarvie was offered Honorary Life Membership, which he was entitled after 25 years of active membership, but he rejected the offer and said he would like to stay "in the harness".

He passed the board of censor's exam and was presented the MDS degree in 1873 by DSSNY President C.A. Marvin (3rd President of SDDS). A year later he was elected to the Boards of Censors and served for 21 years until the Boards of Dental Examiners in 1895. The newly created first State Board of Dental Examiners consisted

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Several courses in each subject will be given during the 1918-19 term, September-July, at 35 West 39th Street, Vanderbilt Clinic and allied hospitals.
For announcement and other particulars address 35 West 39th Street, New York City.

Both Dental Schools placed advertisements in *The Journal of The National Dental Association* in June 1918 before they merged in 1923.

of the current members of the Board of Censors, however, their future successors would be chosen by the New York Board of Regents. Dr. Jarvie was appointed by the Regents and served until 1904 on the subject of Therapeutics and Materia Medica, then took the reigns of DSSNY as its president in 1904. It was only fitting that Fayette C. Walker (21st president of the SDDS) immediately followed with his appointment as a Dental Examiner on the same subject in 1905. Dr. Jarvie served as an examiner for a cumulative 30 years!

When Dr. Jarvie retired from private practice at 65 years old the SDDS threw him a retirement party at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (Nov. 17, 1906). Dr. Charles F. Ash, SDDS President of that time (27th President) was the toastmaster (referring to a person in charge of the proceedings of a public speaking event). Dr. Jarvie was presented with a white alligator skin album with a cover of strikingly etched silver plate filled with parchment paper bound with letters of admiration, gratitude and love from all around the world.

Other notable leadership positions were President of the New York Odontological Society in 1884 for two terms and President of the Operative Dentistry Section of the International Dental Congress at Chicago in 1893. Dr. Jarvie was Associate fellow of the American Academy of Dental Science where he was initially elected in 1873 and member of the Odontological society of Great Britain.

Dr. Jarvie was a life member of the Hamilton Club, member of the Rembrandt Club and Heights Casino, a social club which "catered to the classiest clientele" in Brooklyn Heights and housed Squash courts, and was the first building designed for indoor tennis courts in the U.S. He was 1st Vice President (1895) of the Apollo Glee Club which became one of the most outstanding musical clubs in the country. Dr. Jarvie was also one of the first trustees of the Juilliard Musical Foundation which was created in the will of Augustus D. Juilliard in 1920, "to foster musical education in America."

He was a member of the Dyker Meadow golf club which was built in the 1890s and is today called the Dyker Beach Golf Course and known as the most played course in the country. Dr. Jarvie was a member of the Nassau Country Club which boasted a golf course. He was also the Vice president of Bass Rocks Golf Club in Massachusetts and President of the Bass Rocks Improvement association. Dr. Jarvie would spend the summers in Gloucester Massachusetts with his wife, which is how he got involved with Bass Rocks. Dr. Jarvie loved to travel, go "automobiling" and play golf. He was a member of the United States Seniors' Golf Association when they played the second international golf match against the Canadian Seniors' Golf Association on Sept. 1919. They won the championship and Dr. Jarvie had the low net of 199 -52 = 147.

Dr. William Jarvie Jr. was President at the Lafayette Ave. Presbyterian Church in 1871 and played an active role for many years. He belonged to The St. George's Society of New York, which is a "charitable organization as well as a fellowship society." The society still exists today with its main goals of assisting elderly or disabled New Yorker's of British and Commonwealth heritage. Another notable position he attained was the Director of the Cooperative Law Company.

Dr. Jarvie died at his brother James's house in Montclair, NJ where he lived his last couple of years with his daughter Amelia. He died on November 16, 1921 at age 80 from a cerebral apoplexy which occurred while he was sitting in his chair. Though he left this world quietly, he left us a loud legacy of wonderful accomplishments that still resonates today.

- *Stuart L. Segelnick, D.D.S., M.S., 131st President of the SDDS*