

## William R. Laney, DMD, MS

May 26, 1928–November 14, 2019

We lost a giant recently with the passing of Dr William R. Laney. We've all heard the description of standing on the shoulders of giants as a way to gain new perspectives by thinking in creative ways. Dr Laney was one of the true giants in this field.

Before his work in implant dentistry, Bill Laney was on staff at the Mayo Clinic, where he remained for 32 years while being a full professor, researcher, and educator. He created the Mayo Section of Prosthodontics and started the Graduate Fellowship in Prosthodontics. In addition, he was the chairman of the Dental Department from 1976 until 1985.

Not only was Bill Laney the founding editor of *The International Journal of Oral & Maxillofacial Implants*, but he maintained that editor position for 20 years.

Not only was he the first president of the Academy of Osseointegration, but he was AO's only two-time president. He was the first recipient, after Brånemark himself, of the Osseointegration Foundation's prestigious Nobel Biocare Brånemark Osseointegration Award, recognizing his pioneering efforts and leadership in implant dentistry.

Not only was he the president of the American Board of Prosthodontics, the examining body for the specialty, but he was the youngest board examiner at that time.

Not only was he the president of the Academy of Denture Prosthetics (now the Academy of Prosthodontics) and the American Academy of Maxillofacial Prosthetics, but his contributions to these and all the other prosthodontic academies, societies, and organizations also helped to shape the future for all these groups.

His careful guidance and sage advice took us through many thorny issues and—just a few—silly conflicts. To him, every path was clear and unobstructed once the underbrush was moved aside. He was an expert at shining a light on the path.



Dr Laney was the type of gentleman that dentistry so needs. He was always there, and he never declined requests for help. He was kind, he was tireless, and he was dedicated.

He was also fun. He would arrange his schedule each fall and winter so he could attend the football and basketball games of the University of Minnesota. Most years, this meant standing in the cold watching his team come close but not necessarily winning. This season has, however, been a great one for Minnesota football, with a perfect record as of this writing. I can imagine him cheering for his Gophers.

His family did not know him as the leader of so many prosthodontic and implant dental organizations. They may not even know him as the editor with the ubiquitous red pencil in his grasp. His grandchildren would describe him as Zeke, the name that he had when he was with family. They would talk about his unusual sense of humor that would show itself during the Christmas movie season, particularly with the comedies. His favorite was "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation." Despite his busy schedule, he always made room for family.

Bill Laney had it all. He was the consummate leader and the constant student. He knew how to help people organize themselves into producing good works. He understood the need for change and was a guiding force behind it.

Thank you, Bill, for your time, efforts, and collegiality. We will miss you.

—Steven E. Eckert, DDS, MS