

## 2005 Joseph DiStasio Distinguished Service Award

By Raymond George, Sr.

It seems like yesterday and not 41 years ago that I first met Perry Opin. He was one of my nine classmates at Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry in the School of Graduate Orthodontics. I saw that Perry stood out from the rest not because he wore black horned rimmed glasses but because he was all business, the business of learning orthodontics.

Even though he was not one of the two in our class who graduated from Harvard (instead, Colgate University 1958 and NYU Dental School 1962), it became evident that he was a favorite of Dr. Margolis, Department Chair. He always had a kind word for Perry and he always remembered his name.

Perry worked hard at BU and earned one of only three Masters Degrees that Dr. Margolis had ever awarded. This trait of being a hard worker has remained with him these 41 years. It has helped him develop a great orthodontic practice, take part in all aspects of organized dentistry and orthodontics and still have enough time to be of service to his community.

The professional side of Perry has him practicing in Milford, Connecticut since 1966 and receiving his Board certification in 1974. He has lectured nationally and internationally on many aspects of orthodontics but especially on impactions, cleft palate and the self-ligated bracket. He has been an Assistant Clinical Professor at Yale New Haven Hospital, Department of Dentistry since 1982 as well as being part of their cleft palate team. Perry has since been joined in practice by his son, Gary, also a Diplomate of the ABO. They practice together, lecture together and make orthodontics fun for their patients and themselves. They both also teach at the University of Connecticut Orthodontic School.

The organized dentistry side of this man is

equally as full. He has served the Connecticut State Dental Society in many capacities. He has been a Councilor (eight years) and president of the College of Diplomates of the American Board of Orthodontics. Perry has served NESO as president, delegate, alternate delegate, as a member of many committees and as parliamentarian (1988-present). He has served the AAO as a member of the Board of Trustees (1998-2000) and as Speaker of the House of Delegates (1998-2000).

If you thought that with all of this he would have no time for community service you don't really know him. Perry has served the United Way of Milford, the Milford Kiwanis (president 1971-72), the Milford Jaycees (Outstanding Young Man Award 1970), the Distinguished Service Award 1970) and he has been president and referee-in-chief of the Central Connecticut Youth Hockey Association. He has also served on many boards for the cities of Milford and Orange over the past 20 years.

With all he has accomplished, if you asked Perry of what he is most proud, he would point to his family. He would point to his son, Gary, joining him in practice. He would also point with pride to his son, Eric, who has recently opened his own law firm in Milford. He takes great pride in his daughter-in-law, Wendy, (Eric's wife) and his two grandchildren, Adam and Lauren. Helping him to achieve all that he has done has been his lovely wife, Susan, of 40 years. Yes, this is the same Susan Opin that both NESO and CDABO called on for years to give cooking classes. And, if the truth be told someone who could have been a successful standup comic in her own right. One can easily see that Perry's love of orthodontics is second only to his love of family.



Perry Opin with wife Susan

Is it any wonder that in New York City at the NESO Annual Session we will gather to present Perry Opin with the Joseph DiStasio Distinguished Service Award? It recognizes his service to this Society. It recognizes his willingness to serve his colleagues, his specialty, his community and his patients. It recognizes that hard-working trait of a caring and sensitive friend and colleague.

After 41 years you might think that it would be time for him to slow down. You won't be surprised to know that Perry has accepted the responsibility of General Chairman for the 2009 AAO Annual Session in Boston, Massachusetts. On a personal note, my life has been that much richer because of Perry M. Opin and I bet there are many of you out there who feel the same. Come and help us say congratulations and thank you to Perry in New York. Purchase in advance a ticket to the Installation Luncheon on Sunday, November 13, where Perry Opin will receive the 2005 Joseph DiStasio Distinguished Service Award.