Faculty Teaching Award

Every year the graduating class of Chief Residents has the opportunity to reflect on the faculty that has most effected their training and whom they believe should be recognized for their outstanding teaching abilities. The 2016 graduating class of chief residents chose Dr Will Eward as the recipient of the annual Faculty Teaching Award.

Dr Eward is certainly a deserving educator and surgeon. He was born and raised in the small town of Indialantic, FL, which is near Cocoa Beach and the Kennedy Space Center. His hobbies growing up included surfing, basketball, and swimming. His father was a telecommunications consultant and his mother was an elementary school principal (and currently still is). Dr Eward has two siblings: Leigh, who is his older sister, is a biologist at the University of Cambridge in Cambridge, UK, and Kit is his younger sister who is an MD, trained as an internist; however, she currently is raising a family.

Dr Eward is married to the love of his life, Cindy, who is a small animal surgeon who specializes in treating sarcomas. In addition to being an extraordinary wife and mother, Cindy has many other accomplishments herself including competing in the 1988 Olympics as a sprint kayaker. Cindy and Dr Eward have three children: Aly (13 years old), Luke (11 years old), and Ellery (10 years old).

Dr Eward did his undergraduate studies at Duke University where he also was a competitive swimmer for Duke University. He then went to Veterinary School at Auburn University where he met his wife who was an animal surgery resident at the time. After graduating from Veterinary School, early in his career, Dr Eward started making rounds at a human hospital to increase his learning. It was at this hospital where he became very interested in reconstruction of limbs and reconstructive surgery. This is where his interest in medicine and surgery developed. He subsequently went back to medical school at the University of Vermont where he earned his MD.

He subsequently matched into Orthopaedic Surgery residency at Duke University where his passion for Orthopaedic Tumor Surgery grew. When asked why he chose to go into Tumor, Dr Eward says, “The patients. We have the greatest patients in Orthopaedic oncology. They grow stronger from their battle with cancer. They are very appreciative of what you do to help them, even if they end up losing the battle. I think you get more hugs of appreciation in Orthopaedic Oncology than in any other field.”

After finishing his residency at Duke University he then went on to do a Tumor Fellowship at the University of Toronto. After completing his fellowship he then came back as a permanent faculty member at Duke University Hospital. When asked why he enjoys working at Duke he said, “I like the collaborations and the way the Duke campus makes any kind of collaboration possible. Need a nanoparticle? Just walk over to the engineering building. Need some whole genome sequencing. Walk to the Bio building. For just about any dream you have to make medicine better, there are people at Duke who can figure out how to make it a reality.”

Since being a faculty Orthopaedic surgeon at Duke Dr Eward has excelled as one of the best surgeon educators in the department. His passion for teaching becomes instantly clear the moment you are around Dr Eward. When asked what he likes most about being a teacher, he stated, “Teaching is a huge responsibility for our profession and for our society. If we do not teach – and teach effectively – then we do not pass on the necessary skills and knowledge to the next generation. I think that my job has three equally important components: I have to treat patients to make them better on an individual level. I have to work toward better treatments so that the future of our profession is better than our past. I have to teach residents and students how to become good doctors and good surgeons. While not everyone has to personally do all three, all three things must happen. The latter part – the teaching – is especially rewarding because you can watch your students and residents grow and develop before your eyes.”

When asked why he enjoys teaching the residents, he stated, “Duke residents are outstanding for a number of reasons but let me single out three: 1) Duke residents have incredible passion. Passion to learn. Passion to help people. Passion to take what they’ve learned and teach it to the residents and students who follow in their footsteps. 2) Duke residents are amazing people. Everyone here has an amazing personal story – the things
they’ve accomplished, explored, or mastered along the paths of their lives. They are interesting people. 3) Duke residents teach me. Just about every day I learn something from the Duke residents. I may teach them about tumors … but they teach me about everything else."

Although none of the residents were surprised that Dr Eward was chosen to be the recipient of the Faculty Teaching Award, Dr Eward in his typical humble fashion stated, “The award shocked me. There is nothing I am more proud of – that has meant more to me. It’s a special feeling to think that you made an impact on a group of individuals who are about to go out and start helping people.”

Dr Eward without a doubt has made a powerful impact on not only the chiefs who voted for him as the recipient of this award, but every resident that gets the privilege of working with him. Thank you Dr Eward for being a wonderful clinician, surgeon, educator, husband, and father.

Nathan L Grimm MD