



A Monthly Newsletter from ADEA Executive Director Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H.

*In this month's letter, Dr. Rick Valachovic, Executive Director of the American Dental Education Association, introduces the inaugural William J. Gies Awards for Vision, Innovation, and Achievement.*



### **The Gies Awards: Vision, Innovation, and Achievement for the "Welfare of All"**

*The Gies Awards will focus attention on those contemporary visionaries whose vital work addresses the oral health needs that urgently demand our attention today.*

In September, the ADEAGies Foundation joined by ADEA announced the launch of the William J. Gies Awards for Vision, Innovation, and Achievement. Dr. Gies's name may be familiar to you; in dental circles, it's usually recognized as being synonymous with the highest achievement in dental education and research. In fact, had this pioneer in dental education not existed, I might not be writing to you today. (More on that later—first, the awards.)

The Gies Awards bring recognition to outstanding individual and institutional leaders in global oral health and oral health education. Each year awards will be made to academic dental institutions, dental educators, and public or private partners in these areas:

**VISION**—The articulation and pursuit of an idea or a set of ideals, perspectives, or solutions that attracts the energetic commitment of our colleagues, profession, or industry, creating broader meaning while effectively bridging the present with the future of global oral health and oral health education.

**INNOVATION**—The creation, exchange, evolution, and application of new ideas into new value that helps drive the success of an organization, institution, or enterprise, adding vitality to our profession or industry and advancing the goal of enhancing global oral health and oral health education.

**ACHIEVEMENT**—The accomplishment of worthy and socially commendable actions that make material contributions to global oral health and oral health education.

Nominations for this prestigious award are due November 30; you can visit [www.adeagiesfoundation.org/CallforNominations.pdf](http://www.adeagiesfoundation.org/CallforNominations.pdf) to download a nomination form. I can't stress to you enough how important it is that every ADEA member give thought to nominating a person, an institution, or a public or private partner. Self-nominations are not only perfectly acceptable but encouraged.

Who will receive a Gies Award? Of course, that will be up to the Gies Awards panel of judges, but we anticipate that the honorees will reflect the exemplary traits of William Gies himself: vision, commitment, a passion for innovation, and a dedication to excellence that results in outstanding contributions to dental education and research. Practically speaking, there will be up to three honorees in each of the three categories.



Unlike those who most admire him, Dr. Gies was not a dental professional. In fact, he came to dentistry by a rather circuitous route. He wanted to be a physician, but when he arrived at Gettysburg College in 1890, he discovered that his rural Pennsylvania schooling had not properly prepared him for the "Classical Course" required for future physicians at that time. Lacking a knowledge of Greek and Latin, he chose to pursue a career in science instead, and after earning a master's degree in 1896, he moved to New Haven, where he assisted researchers at Yale University in zoology and physiological chemistry. Before long he had earned a Ph.D. and joined the medical teaching

staff at Columbia University. There he revealed his penchant for innovation when he founded the first department of biological chemistry in a medical school.

In 1909 the First District Dental Society of New York engaged Dr. Gies in a research

project related to oral health, and the young professor embarked on a path that would shape his life and reap profound benefits for our profession. Dr. Gies's work in oral health inspired him to organize the first dental department at Columbia University, to found the *Journal of Dental Research*, to establish the International Association for Dental Research, and to serve on the boards of many other organizations that fueled the development of dentistry as a profession. He published a landmark report, still relevant today, that established dentistry as an essential component of higher education in the health professions. And in 1923 Dr. Gies led the negotiations that resulted in the organization of the American Association of Dental Schools, the organization we know today as ADEA (hence my reason for crediting Dr. Gies with making possible this letter to you).

In the first issue of the *Journal of Dental Research*, Dr. Gies offered a definition of research that places this pursuit in the broader context of human endeavor. I'd like to share his words with you, as I think they capture Dr. Gies' visionary qualities. They also serve as a reminder that the quest for knowledge can have profound implications and benefit the world in tangible ways.

"Research in its highest expression is open-minded inquiry for truth, to be found and revealed unreservedly for the information, instruction, advantage, and welfare of all. Research is war on the autocracy of ignorance. It is one of the finest manifestations of the spirit of democracy. It is one of the growth impulses in civilization."

In 1950, colleagues and admirers of Dr. Gies formed the first U.S. foundation to support dental education and scholarship. In 2002, this private charity joined with ADEA to form the ADEAGies Foundation. This public foundation promotes oral health through programs that encourage excellence in dental education, research, and patient care.

With the establishment of these new awards, [the ADEAGies Foundation](#) is positioning itself for substantial growth. Just as William Gies responded to the pressing needs that characterized the first quarter of the last century, The Gies Awards focus attention on those contemporary visionaries whose vital work addresses the oral health needs that urgently demand our attention today.

The Gies Awards will be presented annually during the ADEA Annual Session, and I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the inaugural awards celebration on Saturday, March 29, 2008. Our world is vastly different from the one William Gies knew, but his vision for our profession is no less meaningful. The ADEAGies Foundation, by creating the Gies Awards, allows all of us to acknowledge the achievements of our contemporaries while honoring Dr. Gies's legacy of excellence.



**Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H.**  
Executive Director  
[valachovic@adea.org](mailto:valachovic@adea.org)

**[American Dental Education Association](#)**

**1400 K Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005**

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**Phone: 202-289-7201 Fax: 202-289-7204**

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