

Herbert B. Schilder, D.D.S., Remembered



AAE member Herbert B. Schilder, D.D.S., of Newton, Mass., passed away on January 25, 2006, following a long illness. A pioneer in the field of endodontics, Dr. Schilder was an AAE past president, serving from 1985-1986, and was

honored with the Association's highest honor, the 1995 Edgar D. Coolidge Award as well as the 1996 Louis I. Grossman Award. He also served on the American Board of Endodontics in the 1970s, was active in the AAE Foundation and

was first vice president of the American Dental Association from 1990-1991.

Along with his service in organized dentistry, Dr. Schilder was very active in education. He was key in establishing the dental school at Boston University, where he served on faculty from 1959-2003. He is well known throughout dentistry for developing a vertical compaction of warm gutta-percha technique that bears his name and is still widely used today.

Dr. Schilder received his D.D.S. from New York University in 1953, and completed an endodontic fellowship at Temple University. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Joan, son Richard, and numerous other family members

and friends.

A scholarship fund in Dr. Schilder's honor has been established at the Boston University School of Dental Medicine. A contribution has been made on behalf of the AAE. Donations can be sent to the:

Herbert Schilder Scholarship Fund
Boston University School of Dental Medicine
100 E. Newton St.
Boston, MA 02118-2308

When I finished my training in Boston in 1951, my mentor, Dr. Henry Goldman, asked me to find an endodontist in Philadelphia to take over the practice of endodontics since Dr. Barney Berg had passed away. While teaching at Penn, I met a young man in the Army who was taking Dr. Louis Grossman's continuing education course and we had a chance to talk. He, Herbert Schilder, asked me if I thought he should limit his practice to endodontics when he finished his military obligation. I asked him if he would move to Boston to fulfill Henry Goldman's request. He agreed and we then called Dr. Morton Amsterdam who was chair of endodontics at Temple University. Dr. Amsterdam interviewed Dr. Schilder and accepted him as his endodontic fellow for one year. After successfully completing his fellowship at Temple, Dr. Schilder moved to Boston and was so busy from day one that he never had time to send out announcements. The rest is history.

—D. Walter Cohen and
Mort Amsterdam

Herb's impact was so great it is difficult to char-



Dr. Schilder (second from left) presides over the AAE's annual business meeting in 1986.

acterize. He was an integral part of our Boston University School of Dental Medicine community from its inception in the late 1950s until his retirement almost a half-century later. He instilled in all of us, but especially his graduates, a commitment to excellence and to the profession. Alumni have gone on to become leaders in practice, education and research, and perhaps this is the most fitting tribute to Herb, his exceptional ability to inspire us to live up to our highest expectations.

—Spencer N. Frankl

My first meeting with Herb took place at the Newcomer's Cocktail Party for the entering specialty students a day or two before our first classes in endodontics were to begin. I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned around and didn't see anybody. Lowering my eyes I saw a somewhat short man with a bright smile with his hand out to shake my hand and welcome me to the Boston University Post Graduate Endodontic Program. I remember that night to this day because, although Herb may have been slight of stature, he was characterized by being tall in every other dimension. The phrase, "Standing on the shoulders of giants" is sometimes overused, but in the case of Dr. Herbert Schilder, it didn't quite describe the intellect and ability to think intuitively



Dr. and Mrs. Schilder (middle and right) are greeted by (from left to right) current AAE Secretary Louis E. Rossman, and Past Presidents James L. Gutmann and Mahmoud Torabinejad, at the 2000 AAE Reception at the ADA Annual Session.

that made him the giant he was. I shall miss him and his insight and advice and will be forever grateful for his friendship.

—Harold Goodis

Dr. Herb Schilder's commitment to the profession of endodontics was unmatched. As the founder of the Boston University School of Dental Medicine's Department of Endodontics, he established a pattern of excellence that continues to this day. In addition, his initiation of a postdoctoral program for a specialty that was new at the time was no small feat, and he carried it off with the meticulous aplomb for which he has become so well known. Herb has indeed left a living legacy to those of us dedicated to the profession of endodontics, and he will be sorely missed. It is indeed an honor and a privilege for me to have the distinction of being the first Her-

bert Schilder Chair in Endodontics.

—**Jeffrey W. Hutter**

When I first came to the United States Dr. Schilder was among the first to welcome me on a professional and personal level. The Langeland/Pitkänen family will forever remember that first Thanksgiving dinner with the Schilder family 40 years ago under the leadership of his most charming wife, Joan. On a professional level Herb and I soon became known for our positions on the opposing sides of the foramen apical (Schilder-beyond, Langeland-at or short of the foramen).

Despite our distinct, publicly known controversies Herb still invited me to address his graduate students at the department of endodontics at Boston University and also invited my graduate students to be present, so that these sharp student groups on both sides of the issue could take advantage of the controversy. That is how Herb has become a milestone in the education of endodontology.

Our unfaltering agreement was over the importance of the shaping and cleaning of the main canal system with the removal of pulp tissue remnants and bacteria, live or dead; again leaving our unsolved disagreement over the lateral canals. This will for ever remain in the history of endodontology.

Herb, Peace with your memory!

—**Kaare Langeland**

We have lost a great teacher, mentor and friend. Herb Schilder devoted his life to endodontics. He was totally involved in every aspect of our specialty. As chairman of the department of endodontics at Boston University since 1959, he trained over 400 endodontists who have spread his desire for excellence throughout the country and the world. His research and innovations contributed greatly to the science of endodontics. His efforts in organized dentistry (AAE, ADA) helped establish endodontics as the strong specialty it is today. With his loving wife, Joan, his community activity and philanthropy extended to Boston University, the Beth Israel Hospital and Temple Israel in Boston. He will be greatly missed.

—**Harold J. Levin**

In 1962, I became one of the first graduates of Herb's postdoctoral program at B.U. At that time, I was privileged to work in his office, which allowed me the opportunity to witness his gifted and caring handling of patients. Herb's love of work and passion for excellence

was most evident. Parenthetically, what a shining example for a new graduate!! In addition, the desire to raise the level of endodontics with his teaching and global lectures has played a major role in my desire to practice and teach these past 44 years. Herb has been my friend, my mentor, my role model. In my eyes he was a giant of a man who will be revered and remembered.

—**Seymour Melnick**

Once in a great rare while, a human being comes along to disrupt the comfort zone of those around him. The agitation occurs because he recommends something better than what was always believed to be adequate. His logic disrupts a universally held belief. His passion exceeds all other concerns. To everyone's resistance he pushes the benefit of his discovery while bluntly highlighting the inadequacy of the conventional wisdom.

Herb Schilder was relentless, passionate and brilliant. His novel perspective profoundly changed clinical endodontics forever and his legacy lives on as the gold standard of endodontic practice. As a powerful teacher, Herb demystified success and failure of an endodontic result thus placing the burden of intellectual honesty clearly upon the shoulders of the clinician.

The world will miss the concise elegant wisdom of Herb Schilder, but his legacy will forever touch the fingers and soul of every dentist holding an endodontic file.

—**Terrell F. Pannkuk**

One thing for certain that all of Herb Schilder's former students will say is that "Herb changed my life." He certainly changed mine. Herb's combination of intuitive genius and uncompromising pursuit of excellence raised the bar of endodontic possibilities for all who had the privilege of hearing him speak and watching him work. Herb was not an easy taskmaster, but we didn't go into endodontics looking for the easy way out. He demanded nothing more of us than he did of himself in providing care for his patients. Herb delighted in bringing a radiograph of his most recent case for us to gape at



Dr. Schilder (left) talks with another endodontic icon I.B. Bender (right) during an AAE reception at the 1986 Annual Session.

as we honed our skills under his tutelage. Herb was first my mentor and later my friend and I feel truly blessed to have known him in both relationships.

—**Bob Rosenberg**

Professor Schilder's contributions changed the landscape of endodontics forever. He literally changed the game of endodontics and taught us to understand, honor and flow with nature's rules and not to fight them. Like all great visionaries, he redefined the realm of the possible using the simple medium of gutta-percha. He gave the endodontic game a new language that more accurately described its essential elements—root canal system, portals of exit, lesions of endodontic origin, predictability, cleaning and shaping, and three-dimensional obturation.

For me, there is one word that captures what Herbert Schilder's contribution to endodontics really represented: courage. As heirs of his genius, we are simultaneously challenged and inspired by Schilderian endodontics. It was literally and profoundly that the human root canal system, with all its beauty, complexity and glory, was a mere metaphor for his soul. Endodontics will miss you, Herb.

—**John West**