

Tribute to Merle Bean

From Dr. Jay Gerber



February 8, 2016

Dr. Merle D. Bean, 1926-2016

I am very sad to report the passing of our dear friend, instructor and fellow teacher Merle Bean. As most of you know Merle was the basis for our functional teaching here at SWOS. Many of you took his classes and everyone who has taken any of my classes has benefited from Merle. A native of Iowa, Merle had a pediatric practice in Des Moines for 41 years. He was most recently living in retirement in Albuquerque, NM with his dear Ellie. He would have been 90 in April. He was Lutheran by faith and a WWII Navy veteran.

It's really difficult to say what his impact on my professional and personal life was and how it extended into the thousands of practices whose doctors he trained and for the tens of thousands of patients who benefited from his teachings and treatment. The knowledge that he so graciously imparted to all of us and the confidence that he gave us to think out of the box as general practitioners, orthodontists and pediatric dentists was his gift to us and our patients. Merle Bean was truly a giant in our field and if you ever studied under him you were truly blessed.

It would be impossible for me to cover all of his professional accomplishments in this space. Let's just say it was amazing, as he lectured all over the USA and in 14 other countries. He presented at some of the world's most prestigious symposiums and association meetings. My association began with Merle in 1984 and the next year he taught a functional course for us (SWOS). It didn't take me long to figure out that this was the instructor we needed to lead us. Merle quickly took over all the functional courses that SWOS sponsored for over 20 years. He also introduced me to Dr. Richard Beistle and informed me we needed to incorporate Sassouni Plus into our curriculum. He retired from practice and mostly from teaching but remained close by if needed.

His "Facial Seminar" was a real eye-opener for those that had little or no understanding of how the face should look after orthodontic treatment. Remember, when he started four bicuspid treatment was the norm. His ability to convey the importance of finishing with a full beautiful face and smile was something that attendees regardless of their level of understand quickly recognized, found necessary and then immediately incorporated into their practice. He was most noted for his work using and teaching the orthopedic facial mask for maxillary advancement in class III skeletal malocclusions. Merle completed over 1100 of these cases in his practice in Des Moines. It was this information along with mandibular advancement to correct class II skeletal malocclusions and second molar replacement therapies that he so readily imparted to us and we passed along to other doctors and patients.

I shared many great times together outside of the classroom in our travels. His friendship was a

life builder for me, it was not all professional as he shared times and stories about families and our families spend time together in cities, beaches and at home. Merle was more than a teacher he was a mentor to me, he was an inspiration and made us want to share with others while making them comfortable at learning.

I hope everyone takes a moment to understand and appreciate the importance of this wonderful sharing man and all that he meant to us and our patients. Once again thanks Merle Bean!

For those who wish to share a card with his family and wife:

Mrs. Elva Bean
1763 Man-O-War Street SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123

Jay



Drs. Klein, Bixby, Bean, Gerber, Beistle, Bailey