

Dr. Ian Tester - A Tribute to Dr. Emo Rajczak

Dr. O'Keefe: At its 2019 annual meeting, the Canadian Academy of Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics (CARDP) paid special tribute to one of its founding members, Dr. Emmanuel Rajczak, who's a prosthodontist in Hamilton, Ontario. Emo as he's known to everybody is a legend in CARDP circles and way beyond. And to tell us today about Emo and why CARDP gave this special tribute to him I'm welcoming Dr. Ian Tester who's a past-president of CARDP and he lives just down the road from Emo in St. Catharines, Ontario. Ian, who's Emo Rajczak?

Dr. Tester: Thank you John. It's such an honor to even talk about Emo and he's a very special person. He's done so much for so many and I think CARDP wanted to recognize that by dedicating an award to him that evening. It was in Toronto and it was called the Doctor E.J. Rajczak Student Scholar Award for Restorative Excellence. Emo as a person I think is best and most eloquently spoken by Dr. Dennis Nimchuk at our tribute and he said that Emo is dignified, dedicated, industrious, and considerate. That says volumes about Emo. Because John, as you said, he's a prosthodontist from Hamilton, dedicated to excellence in everything he does. And I've had the honor of seeing some of Emo's patients over the last few years and his work is exquisite. It is absolutely beautifully done and has longevity. It's been lasting a long, long time. I mean, even with the person, as a dad, five children with his wife, [inaudible], avid golfer, collector, coached hockey, he was really multi-talented and multidisciplinary even in the kids' growth. He writes beautifully. I've been the recipient of one of his handwritten letters of thanks and encouragement, which is absolutely eloquently done.

Dr. O'Keefe: And the organization has now created a special scholarship, tell us a little bit more about that? And it's named in his honor.

Dr. Tester: Absolutely named in his honor, and I think the name of it, the Student Scholar Award goes to Emo's dedication to education, to improving yourself and excellence in everything you do. So this award will be presented yearly and with his name on it, he's very, I know that he was very touched by this, but it also means that his legacy of what he stands for dentally will carry on.

Dr. O'Keefe: What can young colleagues learn from Emo Rajczak as a professional, as a mentor?

Dr. Tester: John, it's such a good question and I personally have benefited so much from Emo. He's helped me grow professionally. Obviously, he's helped me grow as a clinician with my skills and frankly he's helped me as a person. To answer what I think Emo would say, I think the first thing is never stop learning. That's number one. It's lifelong continuing education is good for everyone. It's good for our patients, it's good for our profession, and obviously it's good for us personally.



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And I think he would also add to that the best venue for learning is actually live presentation where you can interact with your speaker, and frankly with your colleagues during lunch, etc. He loves hands-on programs. You can't do that in a virtual environment. He likes to mentor people over the shoulder and I've learned tremendous things from him doing that.

Dr. Tester: I think obviously professionally he's given back so much and he's supported organized dentistry in so many ways. And committee work of course with the RCDSO, CDA, and ultimately the ODA. He's the only non-American past-president of the American Academy Restorative Dentistry. He's got so much going on and that's what Emo would say is you need to give back to your profession. But on a one-to-one basis, he is humble, he's encouraging and he's completely non-critical. And I think that goes a long way to our profession for the future [inaudible] saying what we need to do to grow in our patients' eyes and maybe in our profession's eyes too.

Dr. O'Keefe: Well, what I particularly remember from the evening where the beautiful tribute was made was person after person talking about how they turned up at a meeting for the first time and they were shy and Emo went out of his way to come up to them, make them feel welcome, make them feel part of something. And that was really what resonated with me.

Dr. Tester: Thank you, John, and it probably summarizes who Emo is. And as you probably remember the comments that so many, and these are giants among giants of dentists that are saying this, that he was the first to welcome them. I was one of those very fortunate recipients many years ago of that ,where I didn't know anybody and Emo was like the first person to welcome me. He's done that worldwide.

Dr. O'Keefe: And in a way, to round this out, I would say that CARDP is almost a reflection of his welcoming personality. It's an organization that embraces excellence and welcomes people into its fold. It's a great organization to be part of.

Dr. Tester: Absolutely. It's an organization that I'm immensely proud to have been part of. And I think Emo, his contribution to that, the organization almost reflects Emo. The welcoming aspect, his dedication to scientific learning and making sure that it is scientifically-based and the tireless work that he puts into making sure that we have great speakers and a great, great meeting each year.

Dr. O'Keefe: Well, Dr. Ian Tester, thank you so much for taking time today to talk to us about a mutual friend and hero, Dr. Emo Rajczak.

Dr. Tester: Thank you, John. It's an honor.