

**Academic Achievement Award
Association of Program Directors in Radiology**

Spencer Bradley Gay, MD

Introduction by Bruce J. Hillman, MD

There is nothing more gratifying in our specialty than to have our career contributions recognized by our peers as having been important ones. And certainly, in this regard, Dr. Spencer Gay should feel most honored in having been selected to receive the APDR's third Academic Achievement Award. He has earned this recognition. Dr. Gay has worked tirelessly on behalf of APDR and has made important contributions to the organization – most notably serving on the APDR Program Committee, Chairing its Electronics Communications Committee, and both developing its Website and serving as its Webmaster.

Even more significantly Dr. Gay represents the archetype of the ideals on which APDR is founded. He has served for nearly 10 years as Residency Director at the University of Virginia, where he has developed an outstanding, rigorous, yet collegial and cohesive training program. Dr. Gay has been an innovator in curriculum development. Among other initiatives, he instituted a mandatory research experience for all residents as part of the residency program, then evaluated and published on the effectiveness of the experience. He has been creative in developing new teaching tools. Among his contributions in this regard have been his development of: a Web-based quiz for evaluating residents' progress at the end of a rotation; a phantom for training residents in how to perform CT biopsies; an interactive computerized companion to Grant's Anatomy Atlas; numerous publications instructing radiologists on how to use the Web and digital technology to enhance teaching; and a new text, *Radiology Recall*, aimed at providing concise, interactive instruction in the fundamentals of radiological diagnosis.

Dr. Gay also has been active in the evaluation of training practices. His AUR Whitley Award publication, "The Effect of Pre-Radiology Clinical Training on the performance of Radiology Residents" represents, to this day, nearly the only cogent multiinstitutional data on whether an internship has a significant impact on how good a radiologist a trainee becomes by the end of his residency. But perhaps most importantly, Dr. Gay has been an exceptional mentor and teacher. The majority of his research publications involve resident participation. He twice has been the faculty mentor to residents winning the recently instituted A3CR2 Advisors Award, presented to the resident presenting the best research paper at the AUR Annual Meeting. He has been a Board Examiner since 1995. He is the mentor and Committee Chair for the American College of Radiology Resident and Young Physician Section. For all of these accomplishments, in 1996, the University of Virginia recognized Dr. Gay as one of only five faculty members, institution-wide, to receive its Deans Award for Excellence in Teaching.

These contributions are all the more remarkable when one considers that Dr. Gay has only been a radiologist for 12 years. Despite both of his parents being physicians, Dr. Gay took a most circuitous route to medicine. Growing up in Washington DC, he began his higher education as a fine arts student at Washington and Lee University, transferring to University of North Carolina at Asheville for two years before finally completing his undergraduate work in chemistry at the

University of Miami in 1973. For six years, Dr. Gay pursued a career as a breeder and trainer of Appaloosa horses. An episode during this period typifies the kind of determination that has made Dr. Gay so successful in his career in radiology. A frequent participant in horse shows, he witnessed the awarding of a trophy to the owners of a national champion and vowed to himself that he would one day win such a trophy. Needless to say, Dr. Gay's Appaloosa, Postmark, won a national championship.

Dr. Gay entered the University of Virginia School of Medicine in 1979, stayed on to become a resident in the Department of Radiology in 1983 and a fellow in cross-sectional imaging in 1987, and joined the UVA faculty in 1988. Since that time his career has progressed rapidly. However, Dr. Gay also leads a renaissance life. His quiet, modest demeanor belies the talented, sensitive personality who enjoys a very broad range of interests. Dr. Gay is married to his wife Marit and he has fathered a grown son, Colin, and two younger daughters, Chelsea and Kristin. He is an exceptional and prolific artist, who most recently has focused his talents on woodcarving. And he is a talented musician who once taught himself to play harmonica by listening to self-help tapes while driving his daily commutes to and from work. His video guitar and harmonica performances have become an expected part of each year's resident farewell party.

In selecting Dr. Gay for its Academic Achievement Award, the APDR has honored itself. I can think of no more deserving recipient.