



Dr. Alden Harken Honored with SUS Lifetime Achievement Award



Alden Harken, MD, Alameda Health System's (AHS) Chief of Surgery and Chair of the Surgery Department, was recently honored with the 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of University Surgeons (SUS). Dr. Harken has led the UCSF-East Bay Surgery Program since 2003.

After graduating from Case Western Reserve Medical School in 1967, Dr. Harken completed surgical and pediatric cardiovascular surgical residencies at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital and Boston Children's Medical Center. He served as an investigator for three years in the U.S. Army before joining University of Pennsylvania as Professor of Surgery. Later, he became Chair of the Department of Surgery at the University of Colorado's Health Sciences Center.

Over the course of his career, Dr. Harken has been awarded 10 NIH grants and authored over 500 scientific publications. His contributions to the field of cardiac electrophysiology include influential early work around mapping and surgical ablation for ventricular tachyarrhythmias. Dr. Harken's work in this area helped our understanding of the pathophysiology of ventricular tachycardia and shaped today's methods of ablative treatment of ischemic ventricular tachycardia. He is an expert in the surgical treatment of supraventricular tachyarrhythmias.

According to SUS, "Dr. Harken's energy, insight, enthusiasm and innovative work have created a legacy that will influence the treatment of cardiac arrhythmias for many years to come. He has clearly been a pioneer in the field, and has been a true role model for his colleagues in the SUS and AAS."

Dr. Harken has served as Director of the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Thoracic Surgery, Regent of the American College of Surgeons, and President of the Society of University Surgeons and the Association of Academic Surgery. His numerous teaching awards include the distinguished Lindback Award in 1983 from the University of Pennsylvania, as well as the Julia Burke Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 2005, 2006 and 2012. In 2000, he was awarded the Thomas Jefferson Award from the University of Colorado for his commitment to academic ideals and participation in humanitarian activities.

In an interview with SUS, Dr. Harken said, "The fun part for me is helping aspiring academic surgeons get involved in these activities I find so gratifying, to watch them develop from college student to medical student to surgical resident to junior faculty member."

Dr. Harken has always been engaged in community life, with a particular interest in helping the homeless. As a board member of a Denver-based homeless center, he helped create New Genesis, an organization that works with the Presbyterian Church to take people with drug and alcohol addictions out of jail and into rehab. He has also served for ten years on the Board of Oakland's largest homeless shelter, and been active with Operation Access, a local group that provides medical services for the working poor.

Alameda Health System congratulates Dr. Harken on this momentous Lifetime Achievement Award, and thanks him mightily for his service to our community.