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By Bryan Kay

The Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery (APDVS) bestowed its first-ever Lifetime Achievement in Education Award on the association's one-time president Jack L. Cronenwett, MD, during its annual Spring Meeting (March 26–27).

Making the presentation, APDVS immediate past president Amy Reed, MD, described the new award as the highest honor the association will confer on an individual.

"This award recognizes an individual's outstanding and sustained contributions in the education of our next generation of vascular surgeons," she told the meeting.

The award grew out of discussions held at last year's APDVS Business Meeting. The association then developed an accolade designed to honor vascular surgeon-leaders who have exhibited "outstanding achievement in education of vascular trainees and vascular surgeons as well as leaders in our field," Reed said.

"This individual would have experienced lifelong commitment to education and vascular education, and possesses an incredibly high level of integrity and the highest standards."

Cronenwett is an active emeritus professor of surgery at the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. He is also a past president of the Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS), as well as the New England Society for Vascular Surgery (NESVS).

"I met him first when he was a visiting professor and I was a junior faculty at the University of Cincinnati, and he got me interested in the [Vascular Quality Initiative (VQI)] outcome data, which we use today in our hospitals and in our systems," Reed revealed.

"He was one of the founding fathers of the integrated program for vascular surgery residency, and I was honored to be a very small part of that when I was a member of the APDVS Education Committee. His commitment to education of

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vascular trainees and vascular surgeons in practice is unparalleled, and I can think of no one more deserving than our inaugural recipient for the 2021 APDVS Lifetime Achievement than Dr. Jack Cronenwett.”

Cronenwett said he thought it apt that the award exist under the aegis of the APDVS. “I have a strong place in my heart for the APDVS,” he said. Cronenwett explained that he was around at the start of the association, and served on the Executive Council for more than a decade.

“During that time, I was also fortunate to be appointed to the RRC (Residency Review Committee) for surgery, and was able, in at least a small way, to influence the views around a separate, free-standing vascular surgery residency.”

In 2006, when the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) approved the concept of an integrated vascular surgery residency, “I was in a good position to apply, and I did in the spring about 15 years ago right about now for the Dartmouth program,” he continued.

The accreditation was approved, and Cronenwett announced the development at that year’s SVS Vascular Annual Meeting (VAM), encouraging others to follow suit. He said he has been impressed by the growth of the APDVS in the years since he last attended a meeting in 2003. “I’ve been excited to watch the growth and adoption of vascular integrated training programs in many centers.”

Cronenwett recalled the materials available back when he and colleagues were getting started, contrasting them with the current constitution of the APDVS website, the agenda for this year’s meeting, and the materials currently available. “Things have really come a long way, and all of you who have done so much in these later years to mature this organization should feel really proud of what you’ve done,” he added.

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