

# Championing community ties

## Memorial award encourages community-minded orthodontics students to improve more than just smiles

By Emily Leighton, MA'13

For Dr. Meena Na, Graduate Orthodontics Class of 2016, career and community are one and the same.

"Orthodontics is a profession in service to others," she explained. "Being able to treat patients and build someone's smile is a very challenging and rewarding career."

From volunteer peer support during her studies to providing oral health care to underserved populations in Nicaragua, Dr. Na lives the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry's value of social responsibility, which she feels is an integral part of her profession.

And as the inaugural recipient of the Dr. David C. Way Memorial Award, her efforts have been recognized in memory of a like-minded individual.

The award is named for Dr. David Way, a London orthodontist and a founding member of the Graduate Orthodontics program at Western. He served as the program's Clinical Director for 15 years, from 1973 until his retirement in 1988.

Dr. Way passed away in 2011 at the age of 86.

The resulting memorial gift established the Dr. David C. Way Memorial Award, a \$2,000 annual award for a student who demonstrates academic achievement and community service.

The idea for the award came from Dr. Way's wife, Mrs. Marjorie Way, who was determined to leave behind a legacy in her late husband's memory and to see it established in her lifetime.

During his career, the respected orthodontist mentored students and young professionals in acquiring business and financial skills. Many of his

former students credit his guidance and business acumen for their successful practices.

"My father believed in supporting others in the profession whenever possible," said his son, Robert Way. "He spent countless hours helping other dentists and orthodontists get established, and learn how to save and invest in their practices."

The award has created a special bond between Dr. Na and the late Dr. Way. "This award reminds me that community service is important and to continue building my contributions," said Dr. Na. "I now want to inspire and mentor others as Dr. Way did."

This is the legacy the Way family is investing in. "My mother wanted to pay tribute to my father's love of teaching and helping others," said Robert Way. "We are pleased to leave something in his memory at the dental school to benefit students for the future."

For Dr. Antonios Mamandras, chair, Division of Graduate Orthodontics, the gift celebrates both the 40-year history of the program and its future potential.

"Dr. Way was instrumental in bringing local community support to our program and recruiting the first clinical instructors," said Dr. Mamandras. "I am happy the Way family is connected to our program with this award because they have contributed so much to our success."

Dr. Na also appreciates the history she is now a part of. "Everyone who knew Dr. Way speaks highly of him, with such love and respect," she said. "I am honoured and feel very privileged to receive this memorial award."

The Way family's gift will continue to support and inspire students like Dr. Na.

"The costs of education should never be an insurmountable barrier, and providing an award helps make sure the choice of an orthodontic education remains a possibility," said Robert Way.

Dr. Meena Na is the first recipient of the Dr. David C. Way Memorial Award.

