



## Dr. Kamal Asgar (1922-2012)

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Dr. Kamal Asgar

Ann Arbor, MI — July 17, 2012 — Dr. Kamal Asgar, a member of the research and teaching faculty at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry for nearly 30 years, died July 8 at his home in New Jersey. He was 89.

After earning a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1945 from a college in Tehran, Iran, Dr. Asgar emigrated to the U.S. the following year. Originally, he intended to stay for only a year, during which time he hoped to learn skills that would help him run his father's paint company in Iran. But as he said later, "That year never ended!"

Dr. Asgar earned three degrees from the University of Michigan – a master's degree in chemistry in 1948, a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering in 1951, and a PhD in combined metallurgy and dental materials in 1959.

His career at the School of Dentistry began in 1949, when he was hired as a research assistant by Dr. Floyd Peyton, who chaired the Department of Dental Materials. Dr. Asgar conducted chemical analyses of amalgam for mercury content and also delivered occasional lectures in the area of plastics. In 1956, he became a research associate and dentistry instructor. After earning his PhD in

1959, he became an assistant professor, was promoted to associate professor in 1962, and professor in 1966.

During his research and teaching career, Dr. Asgar's research resulted in a number of major contributions to dentistry including developing: the first spherical high copper alloy, a new casting technique for more accurate casting of dental restorations, a different way of measuring the bond strength of porcelain fused to metal, and a new partial denture alloy.

At U-M, graduating dental students honored him three times with the *Paul Gibbons Award* for outstanding teaching in 1963, 1970, and 1980. He also received the *Wilmer Souder Award* in 1970 from the Dental Materials Group of International Association for Dental Research and the *Hollenback Award* from the Academy of Operative Dentistry in 1984.

In addition to his teaching, Dr. Asgar was a lifelong contributor to AADR-IADR meetings and probably held the longest continuous attendance record of any member at 54 years. He was a member of many professional societies, held many offices, and chaired many committees in these groups. Dr. Asgar also served on many committees on a number of national boards, including the National Board of Dental Examiners. He was also a member of the School of Dentistry's Alumni Society Board of Governors from 2000-2003.

Dr. John Drach, professor emeritus with the School of Dentistry's Department of Biologic and Materials Sciences, and professor emeritus of medicinal chemistry at the College of Pharmacy, worked extensively with Asgar. Drach said of his former colleague, "It's sad to lose such a fine man. Kamal helped me when his department, dental materials, was combined with oral biology to create the new department, Biologic and Materials Sciences, which I chaired."

After retiring from teaching in 1988, Dr. Asgar remained active and made numerous contributions to the Iranian-American academic community through the Kamal Asgar Research Center, an independent non-profit organization that collaborated with university and research organizations worldwide.

A small private family service was held for Asgar in New Jersey. The School of Dentistry has created the Kamal Asgar Dental Materials Fund to honor his teaching and research at U-M. Donations to the fund can be sent to the Office of Development, 540 E. Liberty St., Suite 204, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2210.

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