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AAID TO RECOGNIZE IMPLANT DENTISTRY GREATS AT THE 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CHICAGO —August 17, 2026—The American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID) will present its highest honors at the 75th Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee September 30 – October 3.

The inaugural O. Hilt Tatum Implant Dentistry Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Bernee Dunson, DDS, FAAID, DABOI/ID, whose career reflects meaningful clinical innovation, a lasting footprint on the profession, and an unwavering commitment to teaching. Dr. Dunson earned his DDS from the University of Southern California and completed an oral implantology residency at Loma Linda University under the mentorship of Dr. Tatum. As the founder and director of the Global Dental Implant Institute, he runs the Mid-Atlantic MaxiCourse and trains dentists globally in surgical techniques. A Past President of the AAID and Diplomate of the ABOI/ID, he previously received both the Terry Reynolds Trailblazer Award and the Gershkoff-Goldberg Award. Today, he continues to advance the discipline as CEO of two thriving Atlanta-area practices.

The 2026 Aaron Gershkoff/Norman Goldberg Memorial Award, the most prestigious honor given by the Academy, will be presented to John Minichetti, DMD, FAAID, DABOI/ID for his outstanding contributions and dedication to the field of oral implantology and exceptional service to the Academy. Dr. Minichetti completed his GPR program at Mount Sinai Medical Center and has practiced and taught implant dentistry for over 35 years. He is a board-certified Diplomate of the ABOI/AAID as well as a Past President of both the AAID and the ABOI. Currently, he serves as Chief of the Department of Dentistry and Program Director of the GPR Program at Englewood Hospital. Furthermore, he directs the Center for Implants and Aesthetics at Englewood Dental along with several AAID MaxiCourses, having authored numerous scientific publications and lectured worldwide.

The 2026 Isiah Lew Memorial Research Award will be presented to Robert J. Miller, DDS, FAAID, DABOI/ID in recognition of his legacy of important contributions to research on implant dentistry. Dr. Miller graduated with honors from the New York University College of Dentistry and became a Board-Certified Diplomate of the ABOI/ID. Recognized globally as a leading clinician, educator, and researcher, he served as Chairman of the Department of Oral Implantology at the Atlantic Coast Dental Research Clinic. He was also the Director of the Center for Advanced Aesthetic and Implant Dentistry in Delray Beach, Florida, and Co-Director of the Pacific Institute for Advanced Dental Education. Through his pioneering work in biomaterials, lasers, and implant therapy, Dr. Miller was instrumental in expanding AAID MaxiCourse® education globally.

The 2026 Terry Reynolds Trailblazer Award will be presented to Shane Samy, DMD, FAAID, DABOI/ID for personifying the spirit of inclusion, outreach, and service accomplishments as an

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innovative educator and leader in implant dentistry. Dr. Samy earned his degree from the OHSU School of Dentistry in 1994. He is a Diplomate of the ABOI/ID, an Honored Fellow of the AAID, and a Master of the Academy of General Dentistry. Over his distinguished career, he has held numerous executive leadership positions, including serving as the 2023 President of the AAID. Additionally, he was named the 2014 Dentist of the Year for the Oregon AGD and has previously served as President of both the Oregon AGD and the Lane County Dental Society.

The 2026 Paul Johnson Service Award will be presented to Michael Wehrle, DDS, AFAID for contributing his time, talent, and insight as an exemplary AAID volunteer. A 1989 graduate of Baylor College of Dentistry, Dr. Wehrle completed over 1,000 hours of continuing education to become an Associate Fellow of the AAID and a Diplomate of the ABOI. He founded the Wehrle Implant Immersion Course (WIIC) in 2014 to train dentists in implantology while funding mission work that places free implants for underserved populations in Puebla, Mexico. As a founding member of the BAM Center, his philanthropic efforts also support water ministries, orphanages, and micro-lending initiatives. Furthermore, he co-founded the Northeast Tarrant County Dental Clinic, which provides essential care to underprivileged children.

The 2026 International Dentist of the Year Award will be presented to Paresh Kale, MDS, FAAID, DABOI/ID for his dedicated leadership in the international AAID community. Dr. Kale earned his Master of Dental Surgery in Prosthetic Dentistry in 1991 from the Government Dental College & Hospital, Bombay, graduating at the top of his class. He is a Diplomate of the ABOI/ID, a Fellow of the AAID, and serves as Consultant Implantologist and Head of the Department of Implant Dentistry at Dr. D. Y. Patil Dental College in Pune. A sought-after global speaker, he has delivered over 200 lectures internationally and directs advanced educational programs accredited by the AAID. Additionally, he served as Honorary General Secretary for the Indian Society of Oral Implantologists, where he spearheaded nationwide study clubs and accreditation programs.

For background on each of the awards and the history of past winners, please visit aaid.com/awards.

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Founded in 1951, the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID) is the first professional organization in the world dedicated to implant dentistry. Its membership includes general dentists, dental implantologists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, periodontists, prosthodontists, and others interested in the field of implant dentistry. As a membership organization, the AAID currently represents almost 4,000 dentists worldwide.

For more information about the AAID, visit aaid.com or call the AAID office at 312.335.1550 or 877.335.AAID (2243).