25th Annual WISDM Professional Achievement Awards
The WISDM Professional Achievement Award is presented annually by the Women in Science, Dentistry, and Medicine (WISDM) Faculty Organization, VCU School of Medicine, MCV Campus. This unique award was established in 1993 to acknowledge the special contributions and accomplishments of women faculty in the School of Medicine. The primary purpose of this award is to recognize those women who have served as strong role models and mentors for the professional development of women faculty and who consistently demonstrate qualities that show excellence in one or more of the areas listed below:

1. Success as a mentor and role model; promoter of the professional development of women
2. Professional excellence: to include accomplishments in whichever primary arena (clinical, basic sciences, etc.)
3. Leadership: includes university administrative duties as well as other leadership roles
4. Scholarly endeavors
5. Teaching expertise

These criteria are used by both the VCU School of Medicine and VCU School of Dentistry. Refer to www.womeninmedicine.vcu.edu for additional detail.
Passion and commitment. These words come up repeatedly when students and colleagues describe Saba Masho, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.PH. our 2017 WISDM Professional Achievement Award honoree. Dr. Masho is Professor of Epidemiology in the VCU Departments of Family Medicine and Population Health, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Psychology; her work focuses on maternal and child health epidemiology. She received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Gondar Medical College of Sciences in Ethiopia and her DrPH from the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Masho came to VCU from Marshall University in West Virginia in 2001.

Dr. Masho serves as PI for multiple federally funded research projects in the areas of perinatal health, youth violence prevention and provision of comprehensive care to underserved families. In addition to these grants, she has also completed projects funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Richmond City Health Department, and Virginia Premier. She has authored over 100 peer-reviewed publications, monographs, and book chapters. Approximately half of these publications show her as first or last author; her students are included as authors on many of these papers. Her recognized expertise makes her a popular speaker and she has given over 200 invited lectures, grand rounds, and other presentations at the local and national level.

In 2016 Dr. Masho assumed the role of Graduate Programs Director for the Division of Epidemiology, overseeing the MPH and PhD programs. She also serves as Director of Community Engaged Research at the VCU Institute for Women’s Health, a federally designated National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health. Known for her genuine and caring dedication to supporting her students and guiding them to success, Dr. Masho is a very popular mentor, formally mentoring over 80 graduate students, medical students, and medical residents, and 20 PhD students as dissertation chair or committee member.

In her role at the VCU Institute of Women’s Health, Dr. Masho is responsible for developing a research agenda to guide community based women’s health research at VCU, establishing and building collaboration with community based organizations to foster research, working with faculty to identify funding opportunities, and mentoring junior faculty in community based research. Colleague and former mentee Sarah Kye Price, PhD, MSW, MS, Professor, School of Social Work, recalls that Dr. Masho has "worked to support my grant applications, to expand my reach into the community through mutual partnerships, to encourage and mentor my participation in interdisciplinary women’s health conferences which were beyond my typical trajectory of presentation, to expand my own scholarship in new ways and to collaborate in initiatives within her realm of scholarship that advanced my knowledge and experience. As one of my formal mentors during the KL2 professional development award from the CCTR, she helped me to shape a translational research trajectory which built upon team science, drawing my social work interests into common threads in clinical medicine, public health, and epidemiology."

Another mentee, Patricia Kinser, PhD, WHNP-BC, RN, Assistant Professor, VCU School of Nursing, states "Dr. Masho has demonstrated genuine enthusiasm for our interdisciplinary collaboration. Her drive to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding mechanisms behind poor maternal-child outcomes is
admirable. She is gifted in her ability to explain a complicated research methodology in a simplified way to make data analysis methods seem uncomplicated to those without her extensive epidemiology/statistics background.”

In addition to her research, service, and formal mentoring, Dr. Masho has maintained a significant formal teaching schedule, offering graduate and medical student courses on grant writing, epidemiology, global and population health, violence prevention, perinatal health, and serving as MPH practicum and PhD directed research faculty. She has received 11 teaching awards for teaching MPH, PhD, and MD students in Epidemiology and in the MD Curriculum.

Dr. Masho’s commitment to service is significant and wide-ranging, from service as a HRSA Consultant and Evaluation Consultant for projects in New York City, to participating in the CDC Technical Working Group and Youth Violence Prevention Alcohol Control Workgroup, and the HRSA National Health Start Evaluation Panel. Among local service commitments, she serves as a board member for the Carol Adams Foundation (supporting domestic and sexual violence victims in Richmond) the March of Dimes, Richmond Health Start, and the Community Engagement Federation. Dr. Masho also supports VCU and the SOM through extensive committee work, much of it in leadership positions. Since 2008 she has served as the VCU SOM Women and Science liaison with the AAMC to support advancement of women in science.

In 2015, Dr. Masho was honored by Birth Matters Virginia as a Birth Matters Advocate of the Year for her work in improving birth outcomes and eliminating health disparities for women.

Dr. Masho’s passion for collaboration with our community brings national recognition to VCU. Last year, Dr. Masho and co-principal investigator Terri Sullivan, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, VCU College of Humanities and Sciences were awarded a $6 million, five-year, CDC grant to work with Richmond communities to promote healthy communities and reduce the rate of violence. The project supports the work of the Clark-Hill Institute for Positive Youth Development at VCU, one of five national centers of excellence for youth violence prevention funded by the CDC. Clark-Hill’s mission is to empower youth, schools and families to promote the healthy, safe and otherwise positive development of youth from early adolescence through emerging adulthood. Community partners include the Mosby, Whitcomb and Gilpin court neighborhoods in Richmond’s East End, as well as in Hillside Court and Bellemeade in South Richmond. The current project builds upon more than 15 years of CDC funding.

Dr. Price summarizes well Dr. Masho’s contributions to our school, university, and community. "It is my understanding that the award criteria include success as a mentor and role model to female faculty, professional excellence, leadership, scholarship, and teaching success. I cannot imagine a more worthy recipient, who excels in all of these areas.” We honor Dr. Saba Masbo today for her warmth, passion, commitment and excellence.
Dr. Joan Pellegrini joined the faculty of the School of Dentistry in 1972. Dental hygienist, educator, and mentor, she has continuously grown in her career, and currently serves on the faculty of the Department of Oral Health Promotion and Community Outreach. Since joining the School of Dentistry, Dr. Pellegrini has contributed at a sustained level of excellence with a remarkable passion for her community.

To paraphrase one of Dr. Pellegrini’s recommendation letters, “to be excellent for a short time is one thing, but to sustain continuous excellence for over two decades is another entirely.” Dr. Pellegrini is known as a mentor both of students and faculty, encouraging anyone who seeks her guidance. In her enthusiasm for mentoring those around her to further their careers, to find publishing opportunities, and to pursue new challenges. She has helped to develop the future providers, as well as having an impact on so many individuals. It is often said that “to lead is to serve” and in this sense Dr. Pellegrini has truly lifted up her community.

Her accomplishments and contributions are too numerous to list. Dr. Pellegrini serves on committees at the university level, five at the School of Dentistry level, and two departmental committees. She has cultivated a reputation of dedication and involvement everywhere she participates. While maintaining this level of excellence and involvement, she never loses focus on teaching. Dr. Pellegrini has served as a director for many courses, and has an innate ability to network and to bring people together to develop solutions. She has served her local community as well, having sat on the School Board Health Advisory Committee for Chesterfield County, including as Chair. In May 2010, she was awarded the Best Full-Time Faculty Award, presented by VCU’s Dental Hygiene Students; this is just one among many honors and recognitions that speak to her dedication.

The ethos that unites her wide-ranging achievements and contributions is one of community. With an outstanding sense of civic responsibility and dedication, Dr. Pellegrini has made a vast contribution to the School of Dentistry and the larger VCU community. She is a true embodiment of the values both of WISDM and of the VCU School of Dentistry.
Professional Achievement Award
Past Recipients

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Susan Mellette, M.D., 1993
Carolyn McCue, M.D., 1994
Surinder Kallar, M.D., 1995
Mary Ann Turner, M.D., 1996
Louise Robertson, M.D., 1997
Dawn Mueller, M.D., 1998
Joy Ware, Ph.D., 1999
Ruth Taylor Campbell, M.D., 2000
Michelle Whitehurst-Cook, M.D., 2001
Sandra Welch, Ph.D., 2002
Susan Kornstein, M.D., 2003
Carol Hampton, M.M.S., and Mitzi Nagarkatti, Ph.D., 2004
Ann Simpson Fulcher, M.D., 2005
Wendy S. Klein, M.D., FACP, 2006
Aradhana Bela A. Sood, M.D., M.S.H.A. and Sarah Spiegel, Ph.D., 2007
Ellen L. Brock, M.D., M.P.H., 2008
Mary Helen Hackney, M.D., 2009
Joann N. Bodurtha, M.D., M.P.H., 2010
Lenore M. Buckley, M.D., M.P.H., 2011
Therese M. Duane, M.D., 2012
Suzanne E. Barbour, Ph.D., 2013
Cathy J. Bradley, Ph.D., M.P.A., 2014
PonJola Coney, M.D., 2014
Amelia C. Grover, M.D., 2015
Elizabeth “Betsy” Ripley, M.D., M.S., 2015
Cheryl S. Al-Mateen, M.D., FAACAP, DFAPA, 2016
Professional Achievement Award
Past Recipients

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry

Anne Adams, D.D.S., 2002
Carol N. Brooks, D.D.S., 2004
Kathryn “Kitt” S. Finley-Parker, D.D.S., 2006
Ellen Byrne, D.D.S., Ph.D., 2008
Kim Isringhausen, B.S.D.H., M.P.H., 2009
Carolyn Booker, Ph.D., 2010
Tegwyn Brickhouse, D.D.S., Ph.D., 2011