

Samuel S. Weiss Award

The Samuel S. Weiss Award was established as a service award in commemoration of the founding father of the ACG, Samuel S. Weiss, whose efforts and initiative resulted in the establishment of the College in 1932. It is presented periodically, and not necessarily annually, to a Fellow of the College in recognition of outstanding career service to the American College of Gastroenterology. Nominations are solicited and reviewed by the Awards Committee and the recipients must be approved by the ACG Board of Trustees.

2019 Recipient

Alvin M. Zfass, MD, MACG



Alvin M. Zfass, MD, MACG, graduated from the University of Virginia in 1953 and received his MD from the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) in 1957. He completed his internship and residency at Bellevue Hospital in New York City (the Cornell Division), and Sloan-Kettering. He then completed his training and GI Fellowship at The New York Veterans Hospital in 1963. He returned to Richmond, Virginia and joined Dr. John T. Farrar to begin the first academic GI program at the Medical College of Virginia in 1963. He has held many positions over the years including Chief of the Pancreatico-Biliary Section, Director of Endoscopy, and Director of the General Medical Intensive Care Unit.

Upon joining the program at MCV, he was quickly named coordinator of the M2 GI curriculum. He created a multi-disciplinary team including surgeons, radiologists and pathologists in this “new” curriculum. This “multi-discipline” approach was a novel concept in 1963. His major focus was on teaching the new “GI sub-specialty.” He remained coordinator of M2 for over twenty years and received multiple Teacher of the Year Awards. He was also recognized for his teaching skills by being awarded the first annual Faculty Teaching Award (1991) and the State Counsel of Higher Education (SCHEV) award in 1996.

Dr. Zfass co-founded the Virginia Gastroenterology Society (VGS), which now partners with the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) on the ACG/VGS Regional Postgraduate Course held annually in Williamsburg, Virginia in conjunction with the Old Dominion Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (ODSGNA.) He also founded the Richmond Gut Club which provides regular educational opportunities for gastroenterologists throughout the area. Dr. Zfass was named Master of the ACG in 2001 and has served on many committees, including Educational Affairs, Practice Parameters, Training, and the Archives Committee. He was co-chair of the annual ACG Postgraduate Course in 1992.

In 1987, Dr. Zfass collaborated with the American Cancer Society to establish a statewide Colorectal Cancer Screening Program. This program was designed to teach Primary Care

physicians how to screen for colorectal cancer using flexible sigmoidoscopy. He received the American Cancer Society Professional Education Award for this project.

Throughout his career, Dr. Zfass has received multiple awards for teaching, community service, and leadership; to include the Berk-Fise Clinical Achievement Award from the ACG in 2004 and the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) Distinguished Clinician Award in 1999. He was the ACG Governor for Virginia from 1988 to 1994.

His major contributions in clinical research have been in intestinal motility. He is fortunate to have had the opportunity to collaborate with Dr. Gabriel Makhoul and colleagues in GI motor function research, specifically focused on enteric neurotransmission and propulsive function (peristalsis). Dr. Zfass' enthusiasm in the field led to introduction of emerging technologies, such as ERCP, EUS/FNA, ND-Yag Laser (esophageal cancer), photodynamic therapy (PDT), cryotherapy (Barrett's cancer), and confocal laser endoscopy/microscopy (Barrett's dysplasia). Dr. Zfass has contributed to the literature with over 125 peer reviewed articles, book chapters, and reviews.

When Dr. Zfass retired in 2012, the MCV/VCU Endoscopy Suite was named in his honor. He continues to practice, teach, and do research at the McGuire Veterans Hospital in Richmond, Virginia. He remains as an Emeritus Professor at the Medical College of Virginia/Virginia Commonwealth University.

Despite his multiple awards and leadership positions, Dr. Zfass considers that his greatest contribution to the field of gastroenterology has been the training of more than 250 GI fellows who are now leaders in the community and in academic medicine.

Past Samuel S. Weiss Award Recipients

2018	Peter A. Banks, MD, MACG	1997	Arthur H. Aufses, Jr., MD, MACG
2017	John W. Popp, Jr., MD, MACG	1996	Arvey I. Rogers, MD, MACG
2016	Richard G. Farmer, MD, MS, MACG	1995	Jerome D. Wayne, MD, MACG
	Burton I. Korelitz, MD, MACG	1994	J. Edward Berk, MD, MACG
	Sidney J. Winawer, MD, MACG	1993	Arthur E. Lindner, MD, MACG
2015	Christina M. Surawicz, MD, MACG	1992	Franz Goldstein, MD, MACG
2014	Jamie S. Barkin, MD, MACG	1991	James L. Achord, MD, MACG
2013	Jack A. Di Palma, MD, FAGG	1990	Robert L. Berger, MD, MACG
2012	Martin H. Floch, MD, MACG	1989	Angelo E. DaGradi, MD, MACG
2011	Frank L. Lanza, MD, FAGG	1987	Joseph E. Walther, MD, MACG
2008	Robert E. Kravetz, MD, MACG	1986	Richard L. Wechsler, MD, MACG
2006	William D. Carey, MD, MACG	1984	John P. Papp, MD, MACG
2005	David Y. Graham, MD, MACG	1982	Daniel Weiss, BS, MA
2004	Edgar Achkar, MD, FAGG	1980	David A. Dreiling, MD, MACG
2002	Lawrence J. Brandt, MD, MACG	1978	Henry Colcher, MD, MACG
2001	Joel E. Richter, MD, MACG	1976	Murrel H. Kaplan, MD, FAGG
2000	Seymour Katz, MD, MACG	1974	Robert R. Bartunek, MD, FAGG
1998	Rowen K. Zetterman, MD, FAGG	1972	Milton J. Matzner, MD, FAGG