

Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award



The Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award honors program directors who find innovative ways to teach residents and fellows, and to provide quality health care while remaining connected to the initial impulse to care for others in this environment. Parker J. Palmer is the author of the book *The Courage to Teach*; his promotion of the concept of “living divided no more” has proven relevant to teaching in academic health centers.



Wilma F. Bergfeld, MD

Dermatopathology
Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland, Ohio

Nominators had this to say:

“In her long and storied career at the Cleveland Clinic, Dr. Bergfeld has trained more than 60 fellows in dermatopathology and 175 dermatology residents. Her strength is in her warmth, kindness, and desire to see her trainees succeed. She has the courage to treat her trainees with respect - she tells them they are junior faculty and should conduct themselves as such. She instructs each new group to make decisions and act independently, but that she is there to assist. And when trainees act independently, she doesn't judge or second guess. She is exceptionally supportive and positive. She also has the courage to tell her trainees what they can do better - be it draping a patient for a total body skin exam in a way that affords them privacy or to dress and carry oneself in a highly professional manner. As much as diagnosing and treating skin diseases, these life lessons and mentoring moments are what her trainees reminisce about. And what has had the biggest influence on our careers.”

“[Dr. Bergfeld's] trainees are active in local, national and international societies and, at her encouragement support each other. We even have a name for the group of fellows trained by Dr. Bergfeld - The Demodex Society. I once sat in a board meeting for the American Society of Dermatopathology and was amazed to realize that 10 of the 20 people in the room had trained under Dr. Bergfeld.”

“She has spent the last 55 years teaching medicine to students of all stripes - from international leaders to high school students and nurses. If you are in her vicinity, she is teaching, mentoring, and pushing everyone around her to stretch, push, lead, and succeed.”