



Commencement 2021

Honorary Degree Recipients

Francis G. "Frank" Serio, DMD, MS '91, MBA – Honorary Doctor of Public Service



Since founding the Dominican Dental Mission Project (DDMP), a nonprofit dedicated to providing free dental care to the people of rural Dominican Republic, Frank Serio has spent nearly four decades working to expand access to oral health care while also serving as an educator and dental practitioner.

In 1982, after Serio told a University of Maryland School of Dentistry (UMSOD) audience about his experiences as a volunteer offering free dental services in the Dominican Republic, a few dental students volunteered to return with him the next year. Soon after that, Serio founded DDMP, and the number of volunteers making the charitable missions has continued to grow.

DDMP has provided more than \$19 million in oral health care services to over 65,000 patients and engaged 750-plus volunteers from the United States and the Dominican Republic. For his work with DDMP, Serio received a President's Volunteer Action Award from President George H.W. Bush in 1991 and a Daily Points of Light Award from President George W. Bush in 2001.

In addition to his work in the Dominican Republic, Serio has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity for 15 years and treats underserved patients at Mission of Mercy events in North Carolina and Virginia, Remote Area Medical clinics, and through other domestic dental charities. In 2015, he received the American Dental Association's Humanitarian Award.

"Dr. Serio's tireless commitment to educating future oral health care providers and expanding access to oral health care to

those in need has significantly improved the lives of thousands," said Mark A. Reynolds, DDS, PhD, MA, dean and professor of UMSOD. "Our school also has benefited from Dr. Serio's expertise and example throughout the years. Since leaving the UMSOD faculty, he has returned to our campus as a continuing education instructor, lecturer, and mentor."

A native of New York, Serio earned a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University and dental degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He earned a certificate in periodontics in 1986 and a master's degree in 1991 from UMSOD. He also has an MBA from Millsaps College in Jackson, Miss. He was a faculty member at UMSOD from 1981 to 1993 and also has taught at East Carolina University and the University of Mississippi.

He is currently a staff dentist for Greene County Health Care in eastern North Carolina, where he provides care to underserved residents.

[Back to Honorary Degree Recipients](#)

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