



The consummate professor, Pfefferkon loves to discuss lab conundrums—here, in 2001, with pathologist Joe Schwartzman, MD (Med'72).

SUSTAINING THE PASSION

“SUSTAINING A PASSION FOR TEACHING OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME IS HARD,” says James DiNardo, MD (DC’78 Med ’81). “There’s always more emphasis on research than on teaching, but good teaching deserves support.” That’s why DiNardo recently pledged \$50,000 to create the Elmer R. Pfefferkorn, PhD, Faculty Endowment Fund.

“Dr. Pfefferkorn is masterful at combining theory, historical context, and the use of current real-world examples to create understanding of complex subject matter,” says Interim Dean Duane Compton, PhD. “He is a consummate educator and this fund will help Geisel recognize and reward faculty members who share that commitment and dedication to excellence in teaching.”

Support from the fund includes, but is not limited to, professional development, such as attendance and presentations at professional conferences.

DiNardo admits he does not know Pfefferkorn well; yet, the longtime professor’s encouragement made a lasting impression on DiNardo, who is now chief of Cardiac Anesthesia at Boston Children’s Hospital and professor of anaesthesia at Harvard Medical School.

“I was a very good—but not a great—student as an undergraduate,” explains DiNardo. He credits Pfefferkorn for helping him get into Dartmouth Medical School. “Dr. Pfefferkorn attended a lot of track and cross-country meets, so he knew I was a three-season runner. I think he put in a good word for me because he knew I was a hard worker.”

Do a good job, DiNardo remembers Pfefferkorn telling him. “It was general encouragement, but coming from him, it made a difference.”

By all accounts, Pfefferkorn’s teaching made a difference to generations of medical students at Dartmouth, who’ve honored him for his teaching time and again. Beginning in 1967, Pfefferkorn, now an emeritus professor at Geisel, taught infectious disease, microbiology, parasitology, and virol-

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ogy, in addition to running his own successful research lab.

“I take substantial pleasure in teaching,” Pfefferkorn explained in a Spring 2008 article in this magazine. To perfect his technique, the article noted, he practices each lecture at least three times in front of his fireplace at home. He also admits to picking up ideas—and improving on them—from teachers he’s observed over the years.

By his own account, Pfefferkorn thinks of himself primarily as a researcher. But early on, he recognized that success in research is unpredictable; he knew that with practice, he could succeed as a teacher. “I love teaching,” he says.

Now that DiNardo teaches residents and fellows, he appreciates even more the sustained enthusiasm Pfefferkorn brought to the classroom.

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To learn how you can support teaching at Geisel, contact Sara Lang at Sara.M.Lang@Dartmouth.edu or at (603) 653-0715.

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