Dickson Despommier Receives National Award for Teaching Excellence

BY LESLIE BOEN AND STEPHANIE BERGER

D ickson Despommier, professor of e n v i r o n m e n t a l health sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health (MSPH) and professor of microbiology at Columbia’s College of Physicians & Surgeons, has been named the 2003 winner of the American Medical Students Association (AMSA) National Golden Apple for Teaching Excellence award. Chosen by the Association of physicians-in-training from across the United States, Despommier received his award at the AMSA’s 53rd annual national convention in Washington, D.C.

“I am deeply touched to have been chosen for this award,” said Despommier. “As a teacher, there is nothing more important and fulfilling than having your students and their peers recognize and appreciate you for your work. I thank AMSA for their opportunity to play such an important role in the nomination process that led to his selection.”

“Though Dr. Despommier has been acknowledged many times on our campus for his extraordinary gifts as a mentor and educator, we believe it is fitting and appropriate that he has received national recognition as well,” said Gerald D. Fischbach, executive vice president for health and biomedical sciences and dean of the Faculty of Medicine. “Without question, Dr. Despommier exemplifies the very best of what the American medical education system has to offer. He is richly deserving of this award, and we commend AMSA for its decision.”

The American Medical Student Association, with a half-century history of medical student activism, is the oldest and largest independent association of physicians-in-training in the United States. With a membership of more than 30,000 medical students, pre-medical students, interns and residents from across the country, AMSA continues its commitment to improving medical training and the nation’s health.

Checking for Tremors—May 1950. Professor Maurice Ewing, above left, and Dr. Frank Press, monitor a continuous pen recording device attached to one of the seismographs in Columbia’s old root cellar. Seismographs stand on concrete piers that are anchored on bedrock free from local vibrations.

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