

# HISTORY OF THE AUA GOLD-HEADED CANE AWARD

The AUA Gold-Headed Cane Award, approved by the Executive Committee in 1990, was first presented in 1991. The award may be presented annually to a senior urologist distinguished by outstanding contributions to the profession and to the AUA. Recipients receive a framed certificate and an engraved, 14K gold-headed cane lapel pin.

In an article written for the AUA News in 1999 by former AUA President, Dr. Earl F. Nation, the inspiration for the AUA Gold-Headed Cane award is presumed to have been the highly respected Gold-Headed Cane tradition which began in London in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The tradition of the gold-headed cane, which was carried by a series of distinguished physicians, originated with Dr. John Radcliffe. The gold-headed cane was first carried by Dr. Radcliffe from 1689 to 1714 and it accompanied him on many consultations. He was known by royalty for his medical skills and was considered an outstanding practitioner. Dr. Radcliffe was the first to pass the cane along to a successor whom he considered to be the greatest English physician of his time. For more than a century after Dr. Radcliffe's death, the cane passed successively to five eminent doctors, before the widow of Dr. Matthew Baillie presented it to the Royal College of Physicians in London in 1825, where it remains today on display.

In 1939 Dr. William J. Kerr, Professor of Medicine at the University of California, awarded the first Gold-Headed Cane at that institution to an outstanding senior medical student chosen by the faculty and his classmates. This practice has since spread to other medical institutions in this country.

The Gold-Headed Cane Award is a concept used today by many medical schools and specialty societies to recognize a physician who symbolizes the pursuit of the highest standards of scientific excellence and integrity and earns the respect and goodwill of colleagues and the profession at large.

Since the inception of the AUA's Gold-Headed Cane Award, many distinguished AUA senior urologists have received this honorable award. To be nominated for this award demonstrates the high personal regard, appreciation and respect in which the nominee is held by their peers.



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