

**2009-10 OCUFA TEACHING AND  
ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS  
CITATION FOR MICHAEL J. WILEY**

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Read by Patti Ryan, York University

On behalf of the Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee, I am very honoured to present Dr. Michael Wiley with a 2010 OCUFA teaching award.

In reading through Dr. Wiley's nomination package, I was immediately struck by an inescapable irony. As a Professor and current Chair of the Division of Anatomy in the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto, he has spent much of his career working with microscopes of one type or another, exploring and analyzing the smallest of details. And yet, Dr. Wiley stands apart as one of those rare educators who has a true gift for understanding the "big picture."

It is safe to say that when it comes to anatomy education, Dr. Wiley has indeed "done it all." He is described as a "master teacher" of all branches of anatomy, and over the years, has taught students at all levels from many different faculties. His dedication to high quality teaching has already been recognized by his home institution in the form of several notable teaching awards. He has won the student-selected Faculty of Medicine's Harry Whittaker Memorial Award four times, a feat that his nominator notes has been surpassed by very few others. Most recently, he was selected by his peers to receive the 2010 President's Teaching Award – the most prestigious teaching award at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Wiley's in-class teaching methods are the envy of his colleagues. Several of his students write about his adeptness at breaking down difficult concepts into manageable segments, and describe his lectures and accompanying material as "succinct, useful and interactive." One student praises Dr. Wiley's commitment to emphasizing the need to understand and visualize the material in lieu of memorization, and commends his ability to know exactly what to include in lectures, and how fast to tackle it. His teaching evaluations are consistently among the best in his Department, and a colleague notes that this is particularly impressive since medical students tend to heavily favour lectures delivered by physicians.

Dr. Wiley has been a trail-blazer in the development of innovative teaching tools. He was an early adopter of technology in the classroom, and, as his nominator observes, he "has moved the Faculty of Medicine forward in creating student-focused teaching tools." Among his most impressive contributions is his work with developing *mScope*, an online and interactive virtual microscope that allows students to view and interact with high resolution images of human tissue. A close colleague writes that the impact of this tool has been nothing less than profound. *mScope* has removed many of the pedagogical limitations imposed by the physical microscope by enabling students to access material online, anywhere and anytime. This has facilitated a way of learning that is far more compatible with the needs of current medical students, who are often



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juggling multiple and competing demands. Dr. Wiley's virtual microscope has been in use for several years now, and has been a model for other faculties within the university as well as other sites across the country.

Dr. Wiley's supporters highlight at least two other learning tools which have significantly improved medical education at the University of Toronto. *Anatomia* is a web-based resource developed by Dr. Wiley to assist students with learning the complex regions of human anatomy. Prior to this project, Dr. Wiley developed an Interactive Lab Companion CD which was designed to support the lab component of a core anatomy course. One of his colleague notes that this tool has helped to "revolutionize the study of Gross Anatomy and Histology" in the Faculty of Medicine.

But make no mistake: Dr. Wiley is not interested in technology for technology's sake. He is discerning about its role in teaching and learning, and throughout his career, he has never hesitated to argue for and adopt more traditional methods when he believes they are appropriate. This has been most evident in his efforts to preserve the dissection laboratory as a core component of anatomical training.

In addition to these notable accomplishments, Dr. Wiley has also been "a quiet but persuasive driver of curriculum development." He has been instrumental in the shaping of no less than twelve anatomy courses, and his nominator draws particular attention to his recent work on revising and coordinating the required Structure and Function block for first year medical students. Dr. Wiley has introduced a number of critical revisions to this part of the curriculum which have resulted in a much more integrated and holistic learning experience.

If time permitted, I could easily speak at length about his long record of service, supervision, and administrative responsibilities which provide further evidence of his passionate commitment to teaching and learning. But I will use the time remaining to highlight what stood out to me as his most important contribution: his ability to connect with each student on a personal level, and his sustained attention to not just the published academic curriculum, but to what his nominator describes as the "hidden curriculum" of medical education. Throughout his career, Dr. Wiley has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to ensuring the well-being of students enrolled in one the country's most demanding programs, and he has been acutely sensitive to the "feelings, anxieties, pressure and joys" that are an inherent part of the medical school experience. In his letters of support, he emerges as an exemplary teacher who combines an exceptional academic record with equal parts empathy, compassion, and kindness. Perhaps this was what one student meant when she wrote that "to meet and get to know Dr. Wiley is to be openly welcomed with deep and sustained quiet attention."

And so, in presenting Dr. Wiley with a 2010 OCUFA teaching award, I not only offer my hearty congratulations but also, my gratitude. Thank you for your quiet but consistent efforts to ensure that generations of physicians and other medical professionals emerge from their training with



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not just the academic qualifications needed to succeed, but also, with healthy doses of compassion and humanity. I can't think of a greater accomplishment, and a more deserving recipient of this award than Dr. Michael Wiley.