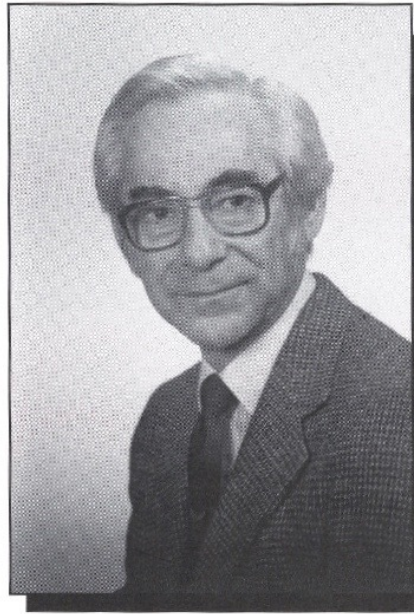


EUGENE W. SUPERNAW

By Bruce P. Hawley, Northern Region Editor

There are few who would question that the life of Dr. Eugene W. Supernaw has been anything less than fascinating. It started on January 2, 1927, when Gene was born to Glenn and Regina Supernaw in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Gene's father was a pharmacist by profession and a native of northern lower Michigan. After several moves back and forth between Wisconsin and Michigan, the family finally settled in the little town of Ellsworth, Michigan (pop. 474), Glenn's birthplace. There, Glenn opened a drug store, in the height of the Depression. Gene literally lived in this drug store, helping his father as well as learning the trade and profession, as much as was allowed. Gene also had a total of three newspaper routes, worked on local farms during summers, and earned his Pharmacist Apprentice Certificate at age 14. He got his first shotgun at age 10 (single - shot .410) which, according to him, is still "just like new." Gene used it to hunt rabbits, a prime source of meat during the "lean" years of the Depression. Ellsworth was a pretty little town situated on two small lakes, allowing for good fishing in the summer as well as winter ice fishing—another source of food!

Gene played junior high as well as high school basketball and baseball, lettering in both sports. He played varsity basketball for three years and was captain of the team in his senior year. Gene also grew up on hockey skates (even though he did not play hockey), skating from grade two until today.



Dr. Gene Supernaw

At that time virtually every town had an outdoor skating rink. Musically talented as well, Gene learned to play the piano, saxophone, and clarinet during his high school years. In 1944 he graduated from Ellsworth High School as valedictorian.

WAR YEARS

Gene enlisted in the United States Navy at age 17, following his graduation. He received Recruit and Service School training at Great Lakes Illinois Naval Training Station, after which he was assigned to the Seventh Fleet in the Philippine Islands, and served there through the end of World War II.

While in the navy, Gene "graduated" in his musical skills from instrumentalist to vocalist, and sang in the Great Lakes choir while stationed at Great Lakes, Illinois. The choir broadcast on Saturday nights over WGN in Chicago, and one highlight was being a guest on the Edgar Bergen - Charlie McCarthy Christmas broadcast in 1944. Gene had hoped to become a naval aviator, having had a keen interest in flying airplanes since childhood, but was too young to qualify on his enlistment in 1944. Gene's last year in the Navy was spent in the Philippines on board the USS Rio Grande, an auxiliary tanker designed to shuttle aviation fuel for airfields from fleet tankers to beach-head jetties. Being assigned to a tanker, Gene says, was a bit jittery—"one small hit and you were all through!"

Gene was honorably discharged from the Navy in July 1946.

HIGHER EDUCATION

In the Winter quarter of 1946, Gene enrolled at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as a pre-med major. It was there that he met his future wife, Cleo Talas. Gene played softball during his summers in an industrial league in northern Michigan, while working as a truck driver for a wholesale produce firm. In 1949 he entered Marquette University School of Dentistry in Milwaukee, graduating in 1953, second in a class of 106. During dental school, he helped organize the Marquette Dental Glee Club in 1949, with 35 dental students participating. This group performed at large banquets in the greater Milwaukee area through his graduation in 1953, usually for the bargain price of a "welcome dinner."

In his senior year of dental school, Gene had the opportunity to do crown and bridge laboratory work in the office of Dr. John Schlick, one of the finer Milwaukee dentists. Finding it frustrating to execute proper laboratory work on many adult cases with underlying malocclusions, Gene felt that, with the help of orthodontics, these cases could be managed in a far superior way. Thus, Gene was inspired to go into the orthodontic specialty. After practicing general dentistry in Grand Haven, Michigan, from June to September, 1953, Gene entered the University of Washington graduate orthodontic program, graduating in June, 1955, with an

Cleo and Gene on their wedding day



Dr. Supernaw being honored by the Orthodontic Education and Research Foundation, St. Louis, Mo., 1993

MSD degree and Certificate in Orthodontics. This was the fifth orthodontic class at the University of Washington. Gene feels privileged to have studied under the tutelage of such orthodontic greats as Alton Moore, Richard Riedel, Paul Lewis, Emery Fraser, E. Allen Bishop, Clifford Freehe, and many others, whose emphasis on perfection became his personal goal. It was during graduate school that he also took up golf, on the "free" afternoon.

ORTHODONTICS

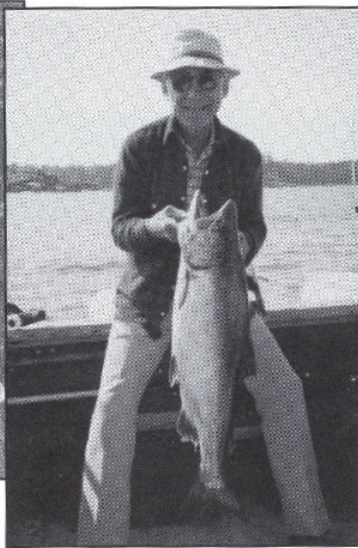
Soon after his graduation, Gene had the opportunity to practice with Dr. Richard Riedel, and finally assumed Dr. Riedel's practice in Everett, Washington, in 1957. In 1958, Gene began instructing graduate students along with Dr. William Takano in the orthodontic clinic at the University of Washington. Gene considers teaching to be one of the noblest of all professions, enabling the teacher to share and pass on to future generations what has been given previously.

Gene's professional career has been very active, with numerous memberships including AAO, PCSO, OKU, Angle Society, Tweed Foundation, and the Cascade Orthodontic study group. He was certified by the American Board of Orthodontics in 1962. In 1968 Gene became President of the Northern Section of the PCSO and President of the Washington State Society of Orthodontists in 1971. He also served in the Washington State Dental Association House of Delegates for nine years, and was President of the Snohomish County Dental Society. In addition to services in the general dental and orthodontic associations, Gene served as one of the first presidents of the University of Washington Orthodontic Alumni Association. Over the last 10 years, he has enjoyed the opportunity to present numerous lectures and postgraduate courses to orthodontic and other dental groups throughout the country. Gene feels that the value of modern

PORTRAIT OF A PROFESSIONAL



The young Gene Supernaw



Dr. Supernaw, the outdoorsman



Gene, Cleo, John and Anne enjoying one of Gene's many passions—flying.

orthodontics is still not known or appreciated by many in the dental profession. He believes that perhaps the greatest breakthroughs during his career have been the developments in the area of orthognathic surgical procedures, enabling us to correct what was previously uncorrectable, and more recently dental implants. In fact, Gene derived the greatest amount of professional satisfaction in working with adult patients in the latter half of his career, fulfilling the mission he set for himself at the time he was inspired to pursue orthodontics.

Gene maintained his private practice of orthodontics in the Everett area for 36 years, passing on his practice in 1993. He continues to keep active clinically and will be lecturing the northern section of the PCSO this June in Sun River, Oregon.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Gene married Cleo several years after starting his orthodontic career, in 1963. He and Cleo have two children, John (age 27), who lives in Everett, and Anne (age 25), who lives in Walnut Creek, California. Over the years, Gene maintained his musical interest by directing the Saint John Catholic Mission Choir in Mukilteo, Washington for 15 years and in 1975 joined the Snohomish County Windjammers Barber Shop Chorus, which is still active. He also has sung in two professional barber shop quartets for the last 17 years that performed throughout the Puget Sound area. In 1968 Gene earned his pilot's license and over the years has become proficient in this enjoyable avocation. He has taken many trips throughout the US and Canada with friends and

family. One special pleasure was flying to northern British Columbia several times to meet longtime friend Dr. Thurman Hice and enjoy great fishing. He also continues to hunt upland birds and big game in the Northwest, along with trout and salmon fishing. He purchased his second pair of used hockey skates in 1994, having purchased his first pair 52 years before in Michigan. At this time, Gene relishes the opportunity to continue his travels with his wife Cleo, as well as enjoy his hobbies and teaching opportunities. He also looks forward to sharing more time with his wife at their lovely home overlooking Puget Sound. As you can see, Gene's life has been a busy one indeed! ■