Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award

for Program Director Excellence

The Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award honors program directors who find innovative ways to teach residents/fellows and to provide quality health care while remaining connected to the initial impulse to care for others in this environment. The ACGME congratulates the 2016 recipients of the Courage to Teach Award.

Michael L. Epter, DO, FAAEM
Program Director for Emergency Medicine
Maricopa Medical Center
Scottsdale, AZ

Nominators had this to say:
"Over the years I have watched, with pride, as he took the training program at the University of Nevada from a fledgling program to one that is highly regarded and highly sought after. Mike would often call to ask my opinion on changes that he wanted to make or innovations he wanted to begin and what always struck me was that his primary concern was always, "How will it affect my residents?" I was always touched that much of our conversation was not about the program but mostly about a struggling resident or one that he was concerned about. It was clear that he took his responsibility as teacher and mentor as a higher calling. I was also moved when Mike's wife gave birth to a beautiful set of twins who decided to enter the world quite a bit early. As we would talk, he would share the challenges they were experiencing and while his family was his life, he would always at the end of the conversation wonder how this experience was affecting his "other family" - his residents."

"Personally, schedules have been harder this year but no interaction goes by without him asking about my wife and children and "prescribing" me to take her on dates and ensure a balanced life. Recently, I was considering taking on extra leadership duties and his response surprised me - suggesting I focus more on family even though a good candidate for the position. I truly appreciated his mentorship/insight into my life and felt that I received valuable guidance that had my best interests in mind."