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2005 Distinguished Achievement Award - Social Sciences

Bernard Micke, M.D. '66

Many people have heard of Physicians for Social Responsibility. Bernard Micke is a physician who has devoted much of his life as a vocal citizen advocate for social justice and peace.

Following graduation, Bernard spent a year in Vietnam in the Medical Service Corps where he helped doctors care for those wounded in combat and for civilian wounded. Inspired and moved by this experience, he entered the Medical College of Wisconsin in 1974, earned his M.D. degree and became a Family Practice Physician in Madison where he continues as a very active physician. As significant as his experience in Vietnam was, Bernard also credits his tenure at St. Norbert College, particularly his contact with his teachers and their examples, for leading him to a career in a service area.

His involvement with Physicians for Social Responsibility has included a special interest in promoting gun control in an effort to reduce the prolific number of deaths and injuries from firearms in this country. He is a founding member of the CHILD SAFE Foundation that, through a partnership with the State Medical Society of Wisconsin and Blue Cross Blue Shield United of Wisconsin, has a goal of preventing accidents and suicides through safety and firearm education, and by reducing ready, easy access to firearms. Public Service announcements; distribution of trigger locks; development of gun safety checklists for use by doctors, hunter safety groups, and law enforcement agencies; and peer mediation in schools are all parts of this effort.

For the past eight years, Bernard has worked to open relations with Cuba and its people who have suffered the effects of the U.S. embargo. A group he helped form, The Wisconsin Project, has provided over a million dollars of donated medicine and equipment to Pediatric Hospital in Camaguey, Cuba, to help care for sick children. As satisfying as this work has been, it has also “focused [his] attention on the inequities and injustices in the world, all too often as a result of the deliberate policies of our government.” Bernard intends to continue to work on the aid program for this children’s hospital in Cuba.

Bernard especially acknowledged his mother and Father Cornell – his “most influential teacher and mentor” – for inspiring his political and social views. Of St. Norbert College, he said, “I had the experience of this college to help me grow.” No doubt, too, that “the great gift of parents who valued education” helped him get the most out of his St. Norbert education.

Reflecting on that educational experience, Bernard encourages today’s students “to take a very questioning approach to what they hear from the current ‘corporatocracy’ that dominates business, the press and government here in the United States. I do not think that the worldview that they promote reflects what I learned here at SNC. And I hope it does not reflect what you learn here now.”

St. Norbert College

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