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**ALPHA OMEGA DENTAL CONVENTION TO HEAR PERRY BRICKMAN SPEAK
ABOUT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST JEWS**

At the opening night session of their convention in Arizona on December 26th, Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity members will hear guest speaker, Dr. Perry Brickman, DDS, speak about the systematic discrimination of Jews at the now-defunct Emory School of Dentistry. Brickman will talk about how students received a personal apology from President James Wagner for years of systematic discrimination against them and other Jewish students at Emory's School of Dentistry between 1948 and 1961.

"As president of Emory University, I hereby express in the deepest, strongest terms Emory's regret for the anti-Semitic practices of the dental school during those years," President James Wagner said. "We at Emory also regret that it has taken this long for those events to be properly acknowledged. I am sorry; we are sorry."

A screening of the documentary, "From Silence to Recognition: Confronting Discrimination in Emory's Dental School History," will be shown at this meeting, with a panel discussion. The film is based on research and interviews by Perry Brickman, who despite excelling at Emory College as an undergraduate biology major received a letter after his first year of Emory's dental school in 1952 informing him that he had "flunked out."

In the film, several former students speak about the hurt and shock of receiving letters saying that their work was not up to par, they lacked the manual skills, or they "didn't have it in the hands"—and the shame they continued to feel decades later. "Nobody believed us," Brickman said. "Our parents said, 'you must not have studied enough.' " Brickman, now 79, went on to graduate with honors from the University of Tennessee's dental school and enjoyed a long career as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon in Decatur.

Brickman was inspired to bring his and fellow students' experiences to light after seeing a 2006 MARBL exhibit showcasing "Jews at Emory" by Associate Professor Eric Goldstein that included a bar graph showing the exceptionally high rates of failure of Jewish students at Emory's dental school during the 1950s. Research by the Anti-Defamation League showed that 65 percent of the Jewish students during the tenure of Dean John Buhler either flunked out or were forced to repeat coursework, but little attention had been paid to this fact and Emory had never publicly acknowledged the discrimination.

"Jewish students were being failed out in inordinate numbers, way out of proportion," Brickman says. "65 percent (of the Jewish students) were either flunked out completely or made to repeat one or more years," he stated. "That was over five times what the non-Jewish failure rate was." The main culprit in the anti-Semitism was the dean of the dental school, Dr. John Buhler. During his tenure as dean, Jewish enrollment at the school declined sharply. He was finally forced to resign after he added a question to the student application in 1962. Buhler added the category of "race," and offered three choices -- "Caucasian, Jew or Other."

For information and reservations for the AO International Convention in Scottsdale, AZ, please contact AO Executive Director, Heidi Weber, at (301) 738-6400.

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