

## Horace Wells 1815 ~ 1848

In December, 1844, Horace Wells, a dentist who practiced in Hartford, Connecticut, observed an accidental injury of an individual who was under the influence of nitrous oxide gas inhaled at a side show. Wells noted that the injured person displayed neither pain nor awareness of injury when he was questioned. The next day, John Riggs extracted a molar from Horace Wells who was under the influence of nitrous oxide gas. The nitrous oxide was administered to the point of loss of consciousness and Wells had no recollection of the extraction.

Wells continued to experiment with the gas, sincerely believing that his discovery would transform the practice of medicine and dentistry, and presented his discovery in Boston at the Mass General Hospital. Unfortunately, the patient exclaimed at the time of the extraction and the demonstration was labeled a failure. Later, the patient stated that he had no recollection of the procedure. Wells, branded a fake and a charlatan, became severely depressed, but did continue to teach others his anesthetic technique. He fully intended that his discovery should be made known to all and "as free as the air we breathe."

Wells experimented with different ways to manufacture and administer anesthetic gases, frequently using himself as the experimental subject with tragic outcome. He died at age 33 in a prison in New York City, destitute and depressed.

However, his discovery of surgical anesthesia, recognized by the American Medical Association (1870 and 1944) and the American Dental Association (1864), has transformed the practice of medicine and dental medicine, and, according to Sir William Osier, constituted "the greatest single gift ever made to suffering humanity."

## The Horace Wells Club Dental Student Scholarship

The Horace Wells Dental Student Scholarship has been established by the Horace Wells Club in an attempt to assist citizens of the state of Connecticut to obtain a dental degree with a minimum of financial indebtedness. The annually awarded \$1,000 scholarships have been established to commemorate the memory of Horace Wells.

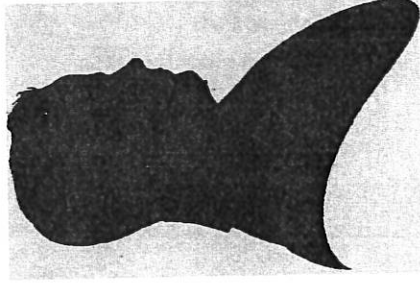
To Apply: Applicants must submit the application on the reverse side, which includes a section to be completed by the dental school's financial aid officer. A letter of recommendation from the Dental School's Dean of Students is also required.

Successful applicants must be citizens of the state of Connecticut, be currently enrolled and in good academic standing in dental school, and demonstrate financial need. A commitment to providing care to the underserved should also be demonstrated. Applications will be reviewed by the Horace Wells Club.

All application materials should be sent to:

Dr. Jeremiah Lowney  
100 Sherman Street Norwich, CT  
06360

## The Horace Wells Club



## DENTAL • STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

2017-2018