The RUDASA rural doctor of the year (Pierre Jaques Award)

In 2002 the Rural Doctors Association of South Africa (RuDASA) inaugurated an annual award for the rural doctor of the year. The award is given to a rural doctor, working at the coal face, who is judged by the RuDASA Committee to have made a significant contribution towards rural health in the previous year. It is intended to be awarded to a practicing rural doctor rather than to someone who has made achievements in the academic arena. It is also awarded for a specific contribution within the previous year rather than for long service. The nature of the contribution is not defined given the great variety of work and activities of rural doctors.

The award was named after Dr Pierre Jaques, a founder member of RuDASA and a doyen of rural practice in South Africa. He spent most of his working life at Elim Hospital in rural Limpopo province and has been a tireless advocate for rural health and the role of the rural doctor in South Africa.

The award is a RuDASA initiative in cooperation with the South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care and the South African Medical Association. The award is made at the annual RUDASA conference.

The first recipient of the award, in 2002, was Dr Thys von Mollendorf, previously medical superintendent of Rob Ferreira Hospital in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga. Subsequent recipients of the award have been as follows:

- 2003: Dr Victor Fredlund, from Mseleni Hospital in northern Kwa-ZuluNatal
- 2004: Dr Hermann Reuter, from MSF in Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape
- 2005: Dr Nigel Hoffman from Rietvlei Hospital in the Eastern Cape
- 2006: Dr Vanga Siwisa from Taung, North West Province

The RuDASA Committee is now calling for nominations for the Pierre Jaques Award for 2007. Any interested person may nominate a rural doctor working in Southern Africa for consideration as the 2007 Rural Doctor of the Year.

Nominations should be submitted to Dr Jenny Nash (082 5327537) at jenny@mseleni.co.za, or faxed to 035 574 1559. Nominations should be accompanied by details of the nominee, including his/her place of work and contact details, as well as a clear motivation as to why the nominee should be considered for the award. Nominators should also provide all their contact details in case more information is required. Please note that current members of the RuDASA committee are not eligible for nomination.

The closing date from nominations is 30 July 2007.

The award will be made during the 11th Annual RuDASA Congress to be held at Badplaas, Mpumalanga, from the 23-25 August 2007.

More information about the award or about RuDASA can be obtained on the RuDASA website www.rudasa.org.za.

Dr Jenny Nash