

Harris Memorial Award Presented to Dr. Bruton in 2001

H. David Bruton, MD, of Carthage, NC, was presented with the distinguished T. Reginald Harris, MD, Award on November 10, 2001, in conjunction with the fall meeting of the North Carolina Medical Society. The award, created by The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence (CCME), formerly, Medical Review of North Carolina, Inc., honors the life and memory of T. Reginald Harris, MD, one of its founding members.

In announcing the 2001 award recipient, Dr. Donald K. Wallace, the then president of the board of directors for CCME, said of Dr. Bruton: "We're delighted to make this presentation to Dr. Bruton. He's a personal friend and esteemed colleague. His contribution to our state and our medical community is unequalled. There could be no better recipient of the Harris award."



Dr. David Bruton, right, is presented with the Harris Memorial Award in 2001 by the then CCME Board President Donald Wallace, MD.

Bruton, the third physician to receive the Award, was nominated by Henry J. Carr, Jr, MD, the then president of the NCMS Foundation, and Robert W. Seligson, CEO, NCMS Foundation and Executive VP/CEO for the North Carolina Medical Society. In submitting their nomination of Dr. Bruton, they had emphasized that "David Bruton has made his life's work a reflection of his deeply held convictions which will benefit many generations of North Carolinians to come."

Bruton is a graduate of the prestigious pediatrics program at Johns Hopkins University and the University of North Carolina. He was named outstanding intern at North Carolina Memorial Hospital. He served as chief of pediatrics at Maxwell Air Force Base and chief of staff at Moore County Memorial Hospital. Dr. Bruton entered private pediatric practice in Southern Pines, where he met the needs of children for 30 years. Carr and Seligson had noted that "he is a tireless and tremendously effective advocate for his patients and for physicians."

Perhaps his greatest contribution to public service came with his appointment as secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services in 1997. Under his leadership, the department made enormous gains in improving access to healthcare for children through the adoption of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which serves more than 70,000 previously uninsured low income children. Despite taking some controversial positions, Bruton remained popular, because few people questioned his motives. He was described, even by opponents, as "someone who cares." In his own words, Bruton described himself as "an unabashed, unrepentant advocate for children."