

**Dr. Alice Coombs is honored by Massachusetts Medical Society
with its Woman Physician Leadership Award**

WALTHAM – Dr. Alice A. Tolbert Coombs, past president of the Massachusetts Medical Society, longtime physician at South Shore Hospital and a professor of medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, has been honored by the Massachusetts Medical Society as the 2020 recipient of the Woman Physician Leadership Award, an honor recognizing outstanding leadership and contributions to patients and the medical profession by a woman physician.

In addition to becoming in 2010 the first Black woman to serve as president of the Medical Society, Dr. Coombs has been active on myriad committees and task forces, including the Committee on Diversity in Medicine.

Dr. Coombs' greatest legacy, however, may be the impact she has made as a mentor to a generation of physicians.

“Dr. Coombs has the extraordinary ability to engage young women physicians in worthwhile causes, while helping them with advancement of their career paths,” said Dr. Ronald Dunlap, a past president of the Massachusetts Medical Society. “Counseling, mentoring and advice of that type was not available early in our careers because of the low number of minority physicians. These efforts consume a significant amount of time - in many cases, over several years with a given mentee, a sacrifice not many would make.”

A leadership force on a national level, Dr. Coombs is active with the American Medical Association and recently was elected to the AMA’s Council on Medical Service.

“I have, personally, been privileged to work with Dr. Coombs on a professional level and as part of the Committee on Diversity in Medicine,” said Dr. Simone Wildes, chair of the MMS Committee on Diversity in Medicine. “She has been an advocate for all minorities, especially African-Americans. Her role in advocacy has been exemplary and one that we all try to follow.”

Dr. Coombs' ability to lead and mentor has been a roadmap for many current and future leaders in medicine.

“(Dr. Coombs) has been very influential in my decision to stay involved in the AMA and the MMS and shown me the importance of organized medicine,” said Dr. Ellana Stinson. “Dr. Coombs has been that voice to champion me when I am not present and has also been the needed support when that small voice of doubt arises.”

Dr. Coombs is a graduate of the University of Southern California and the UCLA School of Medicine.

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) is the statewide professional association for physicians and medical students, supporting 25,000 members. We are dedicated to educating and advocating for the physicians of Massachusetts and patients locally and nationally. A leadership voice in health care, the MMS contributes physician and patient perspectives to influence health-related legislation at the state and federal levels, works in support of public health, provides expert advice on physician practice management, and addresses issues of physician well-being. Under the auspices of the NEJM Group, the MMS extends our mission globally by advancing medical knowledge from research to patient care through the New England Journal of Medicine, NEJM Catalyst, and the NEJM Journal Watch family of specialty publications, and through our education products for health care professionals: NEJM Knowledge+, NEJM Resident 360, and our accredited and comprehensive continuing medical education programs.