

A Brief History of the White Coat

by Dr. Andrew I. Spielman

Why are doctors wearing a white coat? Why not black? Why not street clothes?

Up until the 1870s, doctors wore street clothes, mostly black. Festive, somber, black was the color worn by the clergy. It was also a symbol of the sad outcome of most medical treatments, quite deadly at the time. There was a lack of understanding of the nature of disease. Black is still a symbol of somber festivity. Think about a black tie dinner ...

The white coat was introduced following the discovery of the microbial nature of infections — discoveries made by giants of the late 19th century, such as Semmelweis, Lister, Pasteur, and Koch. It symbolized purity, cleanliness, and honesty.

However, wearing the white coat did not start in the 19th century. White togas (robes) were worn during Roman senatorial elections in the first century. As a result, individuals running for office were called “candidates” from the Latin word *Candida*, meaning white, pure, or honest.

The symbol was powerful enough for the medical profession to adopt the white coat 145 years ago. The ceremony to celebrate entry into the health professions with a white coat is much younger. “White coat ceremonies” started in 1993 at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons by Dr. Arnold P. Gold. Initially these ceremonies involved only medicine, but in the years since, other health professions — including dentistry — have adapted this powerful symbol.

The ceremony defines the expectations of the profession, a code of conduct of honesty. Starting today, as long as you have the right to wear it, with or without a white coat, you are a *candidate*.



CLASS OF 2021 ADVANCED STANDING WHITE COAT CEREMONY

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2019

433 FIRST AVENUE, ROOM 220, NEW YORK, NY

Dear Members of the Class of 2021:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this afternoon's White Coat Ceremony in your honor.

We have great confidence in your potential as individuals and as a class to demonstrate clinical excellence, identify yourselves as men and women of science, and exhibit a high degree of emotional intelligence — that indefinable *something more* that people expect from a doctor.

As we celebrate your achievements, we also thank your families and friends for their continued support of your academic aspirations, and we reaffirm our commitment to be with you every step of the way as you advance toward your goal to become fine dentists.

Sincerely,

***Charles N. Bertolami, DDS, DMedSc
Dean, NYU College of Dentistry***

THE DENTIST'S PLEDGE

I, as a member of the dental profession, will keep this pledge and these stipulations.

I understand and accept that my primary responsibility is to my patients, and I shall dedicate myself to render, to the best of my ability, the highest standard of oral health care and to maintain a relationship of respect and confidence. Therefore, let all come to me safe in the knowledge that their total health and well-being are my first considerations.

I shall accept the responsibility that, as a professional, my competence rests on continuing the attainment of knowledge and skill in the arts and science of dentistry.

I acknowledge my obligation to support and sustain the honor and integrity of the profession, and to conduct myself in all endeavors such that I shall merit the respect of patients, colleagues and my community.

I shall faithfully observe the Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct set forth by the profession.

All this I pledge with pride in my commitment to the profession and the public which it serves.

CLASS OF 2021 ADVANCED STANDING WHITE COAT CEREMONY

WELCOME

Staci Ripkey, EdM, MA

Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Academic Support Services

Eugenia E. Mejia, PhD

Assistant Dean for Admissions & Enrollment Management

OPENING REMARKS

Leslie F. Smithey, DDS, MPH

Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs

PRESENTATION OF THE NYU COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY WHITE COAT PIN

Niaz Ahmed, President, Class of 2021

Pins Presented by

Scott Bradley, Program Coordinator for Student Life & Leadership Initiatives

Emily Wolschlag, Program Coordinator for Student Life & Engagement

PRESENTATION OF THE WHITE COATS

Kenneth L. Allen, DDS, MBA

Clinical Associate Professor & Associate Chair, Dept. of Cariology & Comprehensive Care

Josephine Lomangino-Cheung, DDS, MS

Clinical Assistant Professor, Dept. of Cariology & Comprehensive Care

Director of Advanced Standing, D2 Aesthetics & Advanced Operative Programs

THE RECITATION OF THE DENTIST'S PLEDGE

Josephine Lomangino-Cheung, DDS, MS

HONOREES

Sara Alonso Gonzalez

Claudia Alpizar Nieves

Fatima Alyaffai

Afia Ampomah

Omar Asfour

Luzmaria Barrera Alviar

Savitha Bathini

Valery Brito de Cedeno

Paola Caballero

Carol Cabello

Byron Chen

Olufunke Gbadamosi

Mehak Gupta

Zunaira Inam

Pallavi Joglekar

Kamaldeep Kaur

Navjoat Kaur

Navneet Kaur

Rania Kerdahi

Vinipa Khatkar

Arbnor Kica

Aniya Lobia

Youstina Mantias

Hava Mushbayev

Sholaide Olayeye

Ruddy Rincon

Kunj Sanghvi

Kankshinee Shah

Navdeep Sodhi

Berkay Suer