

**2010**

**ORATOR: Dr. Guenter L. Spanknebel**

**ORATION: “You Have Saved Our Lives”**

Dr. Spanknebel’s oration is an autobiographical summary and series of vignettes beginning when he was a nine year old in Germany during World War II and continuing through his training as a physician.

The title derives from an episode during the bombing of Regensburg when the young Dr. Spanknebel was in a bomb shelter and hearing the sound of an incoming bomb called out “Almighty God, spare my life and I will become your priest”. The bomb landed elsewhere and a woman in the shelter said to Guenter “You have saved our lives” because of the promise he had made. He survived the war with some close calls which reminded him of his promise. When a physician friend of the family told him that as a doctor he could not only help patients with bodily ills but also “have priestly access to their souls when needed” he directed his commitment to a career in medicine.

Further vignettes include a varied work history during medical school, postgraduate education in the United States, experiences on a return to Germany, and eventual return to Worcester Memorial Hospital.