



Dr. Wayne Halstrom

“Together we will prevail for the betterment of the profession and the public we serve.”

Keeping CDA Great Is A Collective Effort

All good things must eventually come to an end. And so it is, with one of the most rewarding, demanding and exhilarating experiences of my life — being president of your Association. The opportunity to visit the many dentists across this vast land, and to meet and greet so many old friends and make new ones, has been a truly mind-expanding experience. Despite being an understudy to immediate past-president Dr. Jack Cottrell and a member of the executive supporting past-president Dr. Alfred Dean, nothing can quite prepare you for the events that take place as the presidential year unfolds.

One of the tasks that fall to the president is to advocate on behalf of the dentists of Canada in presentations to Parliament. During my tenure, CDA appeared before both Senate and House of Commons committees, making recommendations on a variety of important oral health issues. Speaking for dentists in this capacity is certainly made much easier thanks to the excellent CDA staff that stand behind the elected leader in these sometimes daunting situations.

To name just a couple, it is people like Andrew Jones, CDA's director of corporate and government relations, and Dr. Benoit Soucy, CDA's director of membership and professional services, who provide intellectual and factual support if there is a need for specific statistics and figures for the question and answer portion of these presentations. I am extremely grateful for the role that they both played in making these events valuable and memorable.

As my stint as a monthly columnist comes to a close, I would like to focus on an excerpt from an article about seniors' oral health that will appear in an upcoming *Globe and Mail* supplement, as part of CDA's National Oral Health Month campaign. “Within 2 generations, we've gone from a society where people assumed they

would eventually need dentures to having a large population of people in their late 70s who still have most of their teeth.” Is this not truly the measure of what we, the dental profession, have been able to accomplish? In a relatively short time span, the oral health of Canadians has altered dramatically and we can now confidently say “Teeth are for life!”

Throughout this past year, I have been asked, by persons as esteemed as the prime minister, what is dentistry's most pressing issue. My answer has always been, “the primacy of the dentist in the delivery of dental care and the importance of oral health.” This is a commentary that bears repeating at every opportunity. We must make sure that all our representative associations — our national body, our provincial bodies and our local component societies — are truly aligned with this message. Together we will prevail for the betterment of the profession and the public we serve.

When one considers that CDA represents dentists from all across this great land, it is not surprising that varying opinions based on varying levels of expectations are voiced from time to time. There are so many divergent issues to be considered, debated and resolved by consensus. It is not hard to imagine that differences will arise from our many discussions. To differ is to be honest. To close the mind and deny reasoned debate is to be disingenuous. I have urged cooperation and collaboration as the keys to success in our relationships. It is my fervent hope that as I read future columns in this space, I will see the labours of so many who choose to support, mediate and encourage CDA bear fruit as the Association continues to evolve and move forward.

Recently, I read the following quotation in an FDI World Dental Federation publication: “As an association, if we are not great — then how do we become great?” It will take us all working together to achieve that goal. I urge every one of the members of the Canadian Dental Association to reach for the brass ring. Let us all rise to the challenge and keep CDA great!

Wayne Halstrom, BA, DDS
president@cda-adc.ca