

President's Column

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS



Dr. Alfred Dean

When I began my tenure as CDA president, I remember how daunting it seemed to write a monthly column for *JCDA*. Now that my final installment is complete, I am grateful for the opportunity to thank the people whose efforts sometimes go unnoticed.

The past year has been an active one for the Association. CDA is in the final stages of implementing its new governance model. We have restructured our committees and approved the accountability framework — all part of a commitment to our members to improve the decision-making process and the flow of information. In January, we began work on a revised Strategic Plan in partnership with dentistry's stakeholders. Add these initiatives to CDA's new membership model and they collectively represent a solid foundation for the future of our organization.

But we haven't only been looking inward. CDA organized, partnered or participated in several conferences on topics ranging from access to care, seniors' oral health, licensure of foreign-trained specialists and a shared concerns conference between members of the insurance industry and organized dentistry.

In government relations, our messages were conveyed to parliamentarians and cabinet ministers during the Days on the Hill event. I was also fortunate to present before both the Finance and Citizenship and Immigration parliamentary committees. We continue to make progress with the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB), proposing ways to make it work effectively. Our public advocacy campaigns are also effective, judging from the number of interview requests I receive on the subject of oral health as an integral part of overall health.

Tremendous energy and hard work has seen ITRANS develop as planned. This Web-based service is now ready for transmitting claims and I encourage dentists to support this project. On the international front, our relationship with the American Dental Association has flourished. We share information on issues common to our 2 nations and work closely at the FDI World Dental Federation to help improve oral health worldwide.

Such accomplishments would not be possible without the collective efforts of dedicated individuals. As you are currently reading the latest issue of *JCDA*, I hope you can agree that Dr. O'Keefe and his team continue to do a marvelous job with their publications. They are always looking for innovative ways to keep members informed while also reaching out to potential members.

It has been a privilege and honour to work with my fellow directors and

the staff of CDA. This group continually proves its dedication to the profession and the future of the Association. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to all of you who have volunteered for organized dentistry at the local, provincial or national level.

Our profession is strong in Canada, as are its organizations. I can say with complete confidence that the individuals who lead these organizations truly care about the profession and give freely of their time. This spirit of volunteerism should not be undervalued. While it is easy to question our profession's leadership and committee members, passing judgment without knowing the whole story is unjust. Our job is to ask questions and to ensure that the decisions are being made with all the available knowledge.

Travelling across Canada gave me the chance to interact with many dentists and their families along the way. I kissed a cod in Newfoundland, I ate lobster in Prince Edward Island. I experienced Prairie hospitality and I had my wallet emptied at a charity auction in British Columbia. I met dentists both young and old and I was always made to feel welcome at each destination. I tried to serve you the best that I could.

Through it all, I was touched by the expressions of goodwill. While in Vancouver, a young dentist from Calgary approached me, simply to say he thought CDA was doing good work and thanking me for my efforts. An unnecessary gesture but obviously sincere. My time as president may be ending, but I move on with the knowledge that there are many dentists like Dr. Darrell Morden who will ensure that Canadian dentistry thrives in the future.

Memories are made of this.

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