



More Benefit Than Sacrifice

On behalf of the Central Arizona

Dental Society and Arizona Dental Association, INSCRIPTIONS is pleased to "introduce" your Component President for 2010-2011, Martin J. Margetis, DDS.

Born in Johnson City, NY, Dr. Margetis earned a B.S. in Chemistry, B.A. in Biology, and M.S. in Biochemistry from East Stroudsburg University and his dental degree from the Temple University School of Dentistry. He practiced in Philadelphia, PA for about two years before relocating to Arizona where he maintains private practices in General Dentistry in Sun City and Scottsdale.

Dr. Margetis' service to organized dentistry includes Delegate to the AzDA House of Delegates, Secretary of the CADS Board of Directors, and CADS Membership Committee. He also volunteers at St. Joseph's Mercy Care Dental Clinic (Phoenix) and for "Give Kids A Smile," an annual statewide event where dental professionals provide free restorative care (fillings, crowns, extractions, root canals, etc.) and education on the importance of good oral health care habits.

While conducting cancer research at the Hershey Medical Center at Penn State University, Dr. Margetis helped develop the Hormone Response Assay for breast cancer. An avid collector of vintage guitars and other rock memorabilia, he has played guitar and written songs since age 13 and performed with more than 35 rock bands, including as a studio session musician and a 6-gig stint with the Steve Miller Band during the final leg of their "Fly Like An Eagle" tour.

As President of CADS, Dr. Margetis will preside over all business conducted by the society's Board of Directors, appoint special committees, designate chairs, serve as a Delegate-at-Large to the AzDA House of Delegates, and write columns for this journal.

Robert Fulghum wrote a best seller titled "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." What did you learn in kindergarten that you feel will guide you as CADS President?

Since the area of rural Pennsylvania where I grew up was somewhat backward, we did not have kindergarten. However, I do have some vivid memories of my first day of first grade, just before my 6th birthday. I remember Dougie Oakley crying because he peed his pants and got some on his new shoes. I remember Suzette Ousterhaut getting paddled by Mrs. Waterman because she insisted on eating her jelly sandwich at 10:00 a.m. and I remember wanting to quit school because Mrs. Waterman promised to teach me to read and, given a whole day, she had fallen short of her promise. In reverse summary, I learned that the world does not always operate on your timetable and when you have high expectations of others, there is always the possibility of being disappointed. Others in positions of authority have rules regarding how and when you will do things and there are consequences for circumventing those rules. And, most importantly, when you're wearing new shoes try not to pee on them and if you do, don't cry about it or someone will remember it for half a century.

What do you hope to learn during your term of office?

During my term of office, I expect to learn more about the function and operations of the Tripartite System. Since the profession of dentistry provides us with so much opportunity, we should all experience involvement in organized dentistry. We should not be content to merely be a member. I think it should be like the Swiss Army in that a requirement for membership should be a rotation through some of the committees and boards. I know I will benefit more than I will sacrifice for my involvement.

Tell us about your first, or one of your earliest, experiences volunteering for organized dentistry.

My earliest experience with organized dentistry was just after locating to Arizona, about two years after graduating from dental school. I volunteered for the Membership Committee. At that time, I began making connections with an array of dentists who have popped in and out of both my personal and professional lives. How we practice tends to encapsulate our professional contacts. Being involved with organized dentistry exposes one to a myriad of very interesting and wonderful people whom you might otherwise never know. The contacts take on an importance that cannot be predicted initially. Yes, there is at times a commitment of time and effort. Sometimes there are other ways we would rather spend that time, but in the 'Big Picture,' the time and effort are always well spent. The rewards are seldom immediately apparent, but the interfacing with colleagues strengthens our association and the profession as well.

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What are your words of wisdom for fellow members who strive to attain a leadership role in organized dentistry?

I don't know if 'words of wisdom' is a phrase with which I'm comfortable. But I would say that there is no need to hesitate about getting involved. In fact, now is the time to step up and serve your association. Ultimately you will benefit from whatever effort you make. We need new minds and we crave contact that spans generational and cultural separations to unite us all on a professional front.

As you assume office, how would you sum up the state of CADS?

Our component society has benefited from several administrations of leadership that was unselfish and visionary. We are in a healthy position financially with membership. However, anything can be improved and like tending a garden, continued vigilance is extremely important. We have had some challenges of late at the state level, but the current leadership has worked tirelessly above and beyond their basic commitment to take us through a very difficult time. As a person with some insight bestowed by my involvement with organized dentistry, I can assure the membership that they are in very competent hands.

What is the one thing members can expect from you over the next year?

Members can expect a desire to see 'Hands Free' flushers on the urinals in the AzDA building. Considering what we do, the state of the art building, and the times in which we live, I would think this is very reasonable. Okay, sorry for being a little trite, but I do expect to work hard and fill the shoeprints made by Gary Jones, Roger Briggs, and Fred Olsen as they also approached their predecessors' achievements. We have started some projects that will span several years and thus administrations. I pledge to facilitate those projects with all of my available resources.

What would you say are your greatest strengths as a dentist, as a leader, and as a human being?

My greatest strength as a dentist is the compassion and appreciation for life that I have learned from 23 years of practicing

geriatric dentistry. My patients have taught me unquantifiable lessons in life and the practice of dentistry. Leadership does not come to me naturally, and I will be stepping out of my comfort zone, but I will embrace it for the lessons I will learn. I am the most human of beings. My definition of humanity centers on the flaws which make us unique. In that context, I am certainly human. Dentistry is a profession that calls to humanity. We strive to not only alleviate but also prevent human suffering without the glamour associated with medicine. In that rare occasion where we get to save a life (oral cancer screening), few if any really notice. Yet no one would become a dentist without the yearning to help his/her fellow man.

What do you feel is dentistry's greatest strength today?

Dentistry is a profession that has lingered in the shadow of medicine and still is considered separate from that entity by many. This profession was built upon hundreds of years of the application of scientific principles to the evolving understanding of the human body as it relates to the oral cavity. We have established our profession as one worthy of the respect of the community at large as well as our fellow health professions.

What do you feel is dentistry's greatest weakness today?

Now that we are beginning to become recognized as integral to total health by those outside of the profession, the mere achievement of this recognition puts us in the sights of what could be the most pernicious attack the area of health care delivery has ever faced. Government intervention foisting controls, new taxation, and mid-level providers threaten to reduce our profession to a trade. Make no mistake... we are currently on the frontlines of a war. The threat is not scientifically based or a disease entity. It is an economically-driven legislative threat and it is here now.

If ever there was a need for an organizational front, it is today. These threats are particularly poignant for those who are relatively new to practice. The single most important aspect of organized dentistry is the legislative front we can comprise. Those

of you facing 20 or 30 years of future practice need to protect and insure the profession's future to in turn protect and insure the future for you and your families. Legislative involvement is easy. With computerization, you only have to plug in your name and hit 'send.' Well... HIT SEND!

I apologize for the soapbox, but I feel very passionately for the profession I love. I want to see it change and grow, not wither and decline. We owe our predecessors the genuine attempt to keep dentistry a true profession.

Who is your hero?

I have many but there is one particularly close to me -- my wife Sandy. Beneath the bubbly five-foot-one exterior is a 23-year Air Force Veteran who despite being prevented from entering the astronaut program due to a height requirement issue, went on to command the entire Med-Evac Operations for Desert Storm. She was sent to Afghanistan in our first deployment and attained a rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She has been equally impressive in her corporate success. The only factor that has hampered her further ascent is the love we both share for living in Arizona. To move higher in her company would require relocating to Chicago. Although she has received numerous decorations for her military service and similar accolades for her corporate achievements, she certainly deserves a medal for putting up with me. She is an inspiration for her dedication to duty. The support she gives me can neither be quantified nor repaid.

What do you know for sure?

Beyond death and taxes, anything is possible and subject to change or negotiation. There are many things of which I'm relatively certain and hope and believe to be true, but one of my favorite sayings is "We make plans and God laughs." Life, even in dentistry, is an ever unfolding adventure.

Dr. Marty Margetis practices General Dentistry in Sun City and Scottsdale. He is President of the Central Arizona Dental Society.