



# The Diplomat

The American Board of Endodontics Newsletter  
Volume XXX, 2015

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## The President's Message

by James D. Johnson, DDS, MS

We will celebrate the pinning of 72 new Diplomates of the American Board of Endodontics on Thursday, May 7th at AAE 15. This is an extremely important achievement in the professional life of these dedicated individuals, who are featured in this edition of the Diplomat, and is worthy of recognition, respect, and celebration.

Obtaining Board Certification is the culmination of a great deal of effort, both by the new Diplomates, and those who supported them throughout the many days of mentorship and encouragement to ensure their success. All of the family members, faculty, friends, mentors, and colleagues deserve part of the credit for the success of these new Diplomates. On behalf of all the Directors and Staff of the American Board of Endodontics, we wish to extend our heartiest and most sincere congratulations to all of you. The Directors and Staff of the ABE are among your staunchest supporters, and we feel great pride with your accomplishments. Well done!

This year the College of Diplomates and the AAE will hold a ceremony worthy of the achievements of these new Diplomates. There will be a formal ceremony where the Diplomat pins will be awarded. The Pinning Ceremony may be attended by family, friends, colleagues, and mentors. This will enable all new Diplomates to be recognized in a dignified environment worthy of their accomplishment, whether they are the first or the very last to be honored. Following the Pinning Ceremony, there will be a reception where all of those who supported, encouraged, and mentored the new Diplomates are invited to celebrate with them.

I have often heard from very accomplished endodontists that going through the Board Certification process made them a better endodontist, and improved their practice. There is tremendous gratification when one becomes a Diplomat. It is the pinnacle of professional accomplishment. Obtaining such personal and professional suc-

cess makes all of the long hours of work, study, practice, and diligence worth it. It is gratifying to see endodontists who have been in practice for many years go forward and become Diplomates, just as it is to see young endodontists complete the process.

Our specialty of endodontics is forever indebted and beholden to those who have obtained Board Certification. A higher percentage of Board Certified endodontists is a critical constituent to retain our standing as a recognized specialty in dentistry. Every endodontist, not just those who have become Board Certified, must share this responsibility.

To this end, the American Board of Endodontics has succeeded in making the process of Board Certification more user friendly, while still upholding the high standards required of a Board Certified Endodontist. These changes are designed to help endodontists who have been in practice for some time, as well as recent graduates.

*continued on page 11*



## Attention Candidates

**You can now submit your Case History Exam online!**  
**Visit [www.amboardendo.org](http://www.amboardendo.org) to register, download instructions and guidelines, and to submit your exam. Questions?**  
**Contact Ivana Bevacqua at [ibevacqua@aae.org](mailto:ibevacqua@aae.org).**

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# Meet the New Diplomates

**The** main objective of each issue of *The Diplomat* newsletter is to recognize the achievement of each of our newly Board Certified members -- the newsletter is even named in their honor! In what has become a rite of passage for each new Diplomat, the ABE asks them to submit a short bio, a photo, and to answer to the following question: What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat? Congratulations to them all, and may their enlightening, thoughtful, humorous and inspiring words encourage us in all of our challenges.



**Jeffrey S. Albert**  
Delray Beach, FL  
Endodontic Program: New York University  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

It is a great honor to become a Diplomat. Attaining Board Certification has always been an important goal in my professional career. Achieving Board Certification provides an endodontist with the highest level of understanding in the Endodontic specialty. The knowledge gained during this process allows the practitioner to treat the patients using the highest standard of clinical care. It is an integral part of all aspects of the profession: clinical, teaching, lecturing and research.

**Ziyad Allahem**  
Boston, MA  
Endodontic Program: University at Buffalo  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

I am honored to be recognized by the ABE as a new Diplomat. To me, being a Diplomat represents having a strong work ethic and a desire for continuous learning. Being a Diplomat is the pinnacle of our specialty. Going to a strong program at University at Buffalo made this hard journey much easier.

**Riyadh I. Althumairy**  
Boston, MA  
Endodontic Program: University of Texas at San Antonio  
Graduated: 2013

**Greg An**  
Los Altos, CA  
Endodontic Program: Lutheran Medical Center  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

I feel honored and privileged to be a Diplomat of the American Board of Endodontics. I thank the Board and all its examiners for being gracious with their time and giving guidance and support in the certification process. I am humbled to be associated with such distinguished clinicians, researchers, and educators. I would also like to thank all my instructors at Lutheran Medical Center for their mentorship and continued encouragement through residency and beyond. I share my success with them and hope that I can inspire others as they have inspired me.

**Sayeed Attar**  
Keller, TX  
Endodontic Program: University of Minnesota  
Graduated: 2007  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

For me, Board Certification means I have reached the highest level of achievement in our specialty. It is a goal that I have had from the beginning of my residency. And although it has taken a long time, the result is undoubtedly true satisfaction. I am grateful for the opportunity and the support of all my mentors and colleagues. We are blessed to have such a wonderful specialty and Board.



**Adham A. Azim**  
Memphis, TN  
Endodontic Program: Columbia University  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**  
It is an honor to join a sophisticated group of elite endodontists.



**Bella Batsevitsky**  
Waltham, MA  
Endodontic Program: Tufts University  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**



Going through the certification process, I understood the importance and value of achieving the highest level of knowledge and skill possible by applying evidence based research to the practice of Endodontics. Becoming an ABE Diplomat is the culmination of a long and challenging educational journey that could not have been completed without my continued passion for striving to attain the highest quality patient care. Having realized this great accomplishment has endowed me with a tremendous sense of personal satisfaction and pride.

Receiving Diplomat status is the pinnacle of our profession as endodontists, and I feel extremely honored to join this group of dedicated specialists who have committed to maintaining the utmost levels of professional excellence. It is reassuring to patients to know that their endodontist has gone through the arduous certification process and especially comforting if they understand that this was done on a voluntary basis to support educational goals and not as a requirement to practice.

I am incredibly thrilled to share this success with my family, friends, and mentors who have supported me throughout this difficult journey. I am very thankful for all the love and inspiration from my husband Len and daughter Emma without whom this process wouldn't have been possible. I would like to extend my gratefulness to my mentors Dr. Daniel Green and Dr. Robert Amato who encouraged



# Meet the New Diplomates

me to become board certified from the first day of my residency program at Tufts. I truly enjoy my chosen profession as an endodontist and can only hope to make my fellow colleagues proud of the quality care that I deliver every day to my patients.

**Craig J. Berry**  
Cedarhurst, NY  
Endodontic Program: Rutgers School of Dental Medicine  
Graduated: 2013



**David J. Bowers-Evangelista**  
Washington, D.C.  
Endodontic Program: Keesler Medical Center  
Graduated: 2009  
What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?

I feel extremely proud and blessed

to become a Diplomat. As a young adult, my father reminded me that anything worth achieving takes time and great effort. While he wasn't expressly talking about root canals, Board Certification epitomizes my dad's lesson. It requires dedication and personal commitment, but it gives back confidence, skills and diagnostic acumen. I evaluate and treat clinical cases both as a provider and as an educator with greater depth, thought and scrutiny. Overall, the Board Certification process has deepened my appreciation for evidence based literature and treatment applications which benefits my patients, my residents and my colleagues.

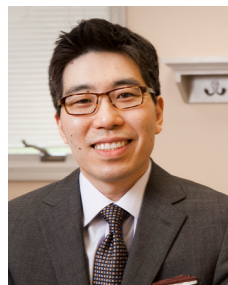
I am expressly thankful for the education, mentoring and motivation I received from the entire faculty at Texas A&M University Baylor College of Dentistry, Keesler AFB Medical Center and the US Air Endodontic Corp. They established a standard of excellence and expectation that culminated with Board Certification.

**J. Brandon Carroll**  
Corinth, TX  
Endodontic Program: University of Iowa  
Graduated: 2011

**Jeffrey Chen**  
Ridgewood, NJ  
Endodontic Program: University of Pennsylvania  
Graduated: 2000

What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?

A Diplomat once told me that being Board Certified in endodontics means placing an exclamation point at the end of your degree. I couldn't agree more! It means that I have put forth the time and effort not only for a personal goal but for maintaining the excellence and continuation of our specialty. I am honored and humbled to be in a group of such dedicated individuals.



**Christopher S. Chevront**  
Somerset, KY  
Endodontic Program: University of Louisville  
Graduated: 2011

**Sonia Chopra**  
Charlotte, NC  
Endodontic Program: Nova Southeastern University  
Graduated: 2008

What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?

Becoming a Diplomat shows one's dedication and commitment to our specialty. The process is challenging and time consuming, but completely rewarding. To re-learn the science behind what we do on a day-to-day basis has really made an impact on my confidence and ability as a clinician. Being able to accomplish this goal at a very busy time of life makes it even more personally gratifying. I encourage every endodontist to make this commitment so that we can collectively provide excellence in endodontics.



**Rene Chu**  
Iowa City, IA  
Endodontic Program: University of Iowa  
Graduated: 2013  
What does it

mean to you to be a Diplomat?

Becoming a Diplomat of the American Board of Endodontics means a commitment to the specialty. It is a honor to become a Diplomat as it represents a lifelong dedication to improving myself and Endodontics. As I started my journey years ago, I did not grasp the importance of supporting and participating in the ABE. However with the support and mentorship of the Faculty at the University of Iowa, I understood how the ABE serves to represent pinnacle of the specialty. I am grateful for the knowledge I have attained during this journey as it will benefit both my clinical and academic future.



**Margaret Cielecki**  
Mascouche, QC  
Endodontic Program: Nova Southeastern University  
Graduated: 2011  
What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?

Achieving Diplomat status gives

me a great sense of professional accomplishment. It also means to be thankful to all those who have helped along the way and to be helpful to others in the future.

**Paul M. Creer**  
Springville, UT  
Endodontic Program: University of Texas at San Antonio  
Graduated: 2005  
What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?

Becoming a Diplomat is something I am very proud of. I can honestly say that I am a better, more well-rounded, practitioner because of the Board Certification process. Anything worth having is worth sacrificing and working for. Achieving Diplomat status is a goal I have had for myself since making the decision to pursue endodontics as a career. I felt like I owed it to myself and to the many faculty/mentors who have sacrificed so much time on my behalf. I am forever grateful for their example and influence.



# Meet the New Diplomates



**Jasmin de Guzman**  
Elgin, OK  
Endodontic Program: U.S. Army Dental Activity, Fort Bragg  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

I am proud to be recognized as a Diplomate. This is the culmination of years of rigorous academic study, and a dedication to clinical excellence. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the many sacrifices of my wonderful husband, Jonathan; and our ever patient children, Kai, Zara, Benicio and Olivier. I am grateful for the support of my colleagues, and the guidance from my outstanding mentors: COL Pete Mines and LTC Andy Anderson.

**Carla Dersarkissian**  
Elizabeth, NJ  
Endodontic Program: New York University  
Graduated: 2006

**Matthew Dietrich**  
Arcadia, OK  
Endodontic Program: Wilford USAF Medical Center  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**



The process to become a Diplomate began when I started my endodontic residency. From the first day, my mentors prepared me to challenge the Board Certification process. It meant all the hard work during and after residency paid off and I earned the honor that came with the distinction of being a Diplomate and a specialist of endodontics. It also represents a commitment on my part to strive to grow in the endodontic profession and advance the specialty for future graduates. I feel privileged to be in this distinguished group of endodontic practitioners.

**Christopher D. Dorr**  
Brewer, ME  
Endodontic Program: Boston University  
Graduated: 2006  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

It is a great honor to be recognized as a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics. I've found the path toward this goal to be challenging, rewarding and humbling. Managing preparation time with the multitude of life responsibilities was most challenging. This proved to be a beneficial exercise in what it takes to be a lifetime learner. Rewards include, the opportunity to demonstrate to my children the value of persistence, enhancing my ability to provide evidence based care for my patients, and refining my clinical practice with sound medical and dental knowledge to lead my team. The Board process has impressed on me the history of dentistry and the ever changing advances in endodontics. I have a much greater awareness and respect for my colleges whose research efforts have provided a foundation for continuous improvement and literature support. I'm thankful I was able to strengthen old friendships and forge new ones along the way. The College of Diplomate's preparation courses and website has become a valuable resource for me that I continue to refer to. I'm grateful to the ABE Board members, Dr. Jeffrey Hutter and my fellow residents for encouraging and supporting me to pursue Board Certification. I'm also thankful to my understanding wife and family for their patience and support throughout the process. Being an ABE Diplomate means that I recognize my responsibility to continue life-long learning for the benefit of my patients, my referring colleagues, and the growth of my endodontic team. It is a passport to further growth, and a privilege to be among those who have come before me.



**Mitchell R. Edlund**  
Sarasota, FL  
Endodontic Program: University of Florida  
Graduated: 2010  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Being a Diplomate is part of a commitment to always be learning and striving to be the best I can be. I'm really excited to be part of such a great group of people!

**Steven Edlund**  
Livonia, MI  
Endodontic Program: University of Michigan  
Graduated: 2010  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**



Obtaining Board Certification is another way to show commitment to the profession of endodontics. I am fortunate to have had many great mentors and to have developed many close friendships through our profession, so pursuing Board Certification was a good and natural fit for me. The most important thing is always patient care. However, having the support of the professional associations surrounding the specialty of endodontics is essential to helping me continue my goal of providing excellent treatment.



**Nivine Y. El-Refai**  
Medina, OH  
Endodontic Program: Case Western Reserve University  
Graduated: 2000  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

As a clinical endodontist and volunteer faculty, I am very excited and honored to have achieved Diplomate status. To me it means representing my specialty at the highest level and it's the beginning of a lifelong pursuit of excellence in endodontics. Being a Diplomate has been my goal since I finished my residency program in 2000 and although it was a long and difficult journey, I could not have done it without my family's constant encouragement and the support and guidance of my program director and residents. The Board Certification process helped me become a better instructor and clinician. I encourage every recent graduate and practicing endodontist to become certified. It is not impossible; it just needs determination, focus and attention to detail. I am truly honored to be part of this distinguished group of



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dedicated clinicians and educators.

**Michael D. Ferreira**  
**Highland Park, IL**  
**Endodontic Program: Naval Postgraduate Dental School, Bethesda**  
**Graduated: 2011**

**Suanhow Howard Foo**  
**Hacienda Heights, CA**  
**Endodontic Program: University of Southern California**  
**Graduated: 2010**  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**



When I was younger, I used to look to the stars and wonder what it would be like to land on another planet. I had hoped to become an astronaut and explore the heavens one day. Fast forward five years, due to a lack of pilot training, some physical attributes, and time constraints, I now find myself exploring the depths of the human mouth. A very satisfying profession nonetheless. The day I received my Board Certification letter, I was elated that all my years of dental and endodontic training had come to fruition. I have now received the highest award an endodontist can achieve. Dr. James H. Simon always said, "The final step to becoming an endodontist is Board Certification." Those words have both encouraged and haunted me as I prepared for the Boards. I felt that it was both a validation and a duty to my peers that I become Board Certified. I wanted to know that I have the knowledge to better treat my patients, the knowledge to better advise the dental community, and finally the knowledge to carry on interesting conversations at cocktail parties. As you look across this page, you will find many endodontists extolling the virtues of Board Certification. So instead of repeating those wonderful essays, I will now take this opportunity to thank individuals who have helped me along the Board Certification path. Dr. James H. Simon, Dr. Sam Oglesby, Dr. Ilan Rotstein, Dr. Dan Schechter, Dr. Thomas Levy, and Dr. Rafael Roges. I also want to extend a special thank you to my mentor Dr. Takashi Komabayashi who spent a great amount of time guiding me through the rigorous Board Certification process. Finally I want to thank the American Board of Endodontics for creating a

friendly atmosphere to all the Candidates. I have learned through hard work and inspiration, dreams do come true. As for becoming an astronaut, that is another story. Thank you.

**Stuart G. Gibby**  
**Pleasant View, UT**  
**Endodontic Program: University of Missouri, Kansas City**  
**Graduated: 2008**  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

I thought that becoming a Diplomate would mean that I would finally be at the "pinnacle" of my profession. However, this journey to Board Certification has taught me that this "pinnacle" is a dynamic one. Becoming Board Certified has helped me realize that perpetual learning is integral to excellence in endodontics. This is the realization of a long-time goal, has certainly made me a better and more discerning clinician, and it means that I am finally finished jumping through hoops!



**Samantha Harris Roach**  
**Minneapolis, MN**  
**Endodontic Program: University of Minnesota**  
**Graduated: 2011**  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

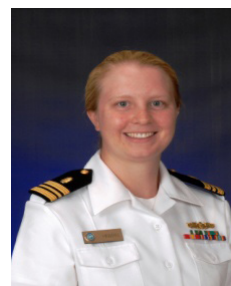
I am proud to have accomplished this professional goal. I feel that the process has helped make me a better clinician and endodontic educator. I am committed to upholding the standards of Diplomate status by continuing to practice and teach in accordance with the most current endodontic literature.



**Meghan Elizabeth Hatfield**  
**New York, NY**  
**Endodontic Program: Rutgers School of Dental Medicine**  
**Graduated: 2011**  
**What does it mean to you to be**

**a Diplomate?**

I am so honored and proud to have attained Diplomate status with the American Board of Endodontics. Attaining the highest academic and clinical achievement in my chosen specialty of Endodontics is truly a very satisfying personal and professional accomplishment. This honor, bestowed by the ABE, solidifies my lifelong commitment to deliver the highest quality clinical endodontic care to my patients. I realize the critical importance of continued education and the need to constantly challenge and question our clinical judgments and technical skills. I would like to thank Dr. Gary Hartwell for his steadfast guidance and motivation to engage and complete this daunting and challenging process. I would also like to thank the Board and its examiners for their commitment to excellence in our profession.



**Susan Elizabeth Hinman**  
**Rockville, MD**  
**Endodontic Program: Naval Postgraduate Dental School, Bethesda**  
**Graduated: 2012**  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Having challenged and met the standards of the American Board of Endodontics means that I find myself among colleagues who use knowledge and skill to advance the specialty of endodontics. I am proud of challenging myself to meet the highest expectations of the specialty and to be an example for those I mentor. I can continue to practice endodontics knowing that I can continue to bring the specialty forward and promote endodontics into the future.

**Jae I. Hwang**  
**Johns Creek, GA**  
**Endodontic Program: US Army Dental Activity, Fort Gordon**  
**Graduated: 2009**

**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

It is a great honor and I am so thrilled to be a Diplomate. Becoming a Diplomate means my professional commitment to



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strive for excellence. I am thankful for my mentors of US Army Endodontics, especially COL's Stephanie Sidow and Katherine McNally who have provided me complete support and attention through the entire process.



**James Jespersen**  
La Crosse, WI  
Endodontic Program: University of Iowa  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
Becoming a Diplomate is a commitment to my patients,

the profession, and myself to continue to provide the highest level of care possible. I would like to sincerely thank my mentors at the University of Iowa for their invaluable support throughout this process.

**Laila Kafi**  
Providence, RI  
Endodontic Program: Boston University  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Becoming a Diplomate fulfilled a deep personal commitment to achieve the highest level of distinction in our profession. More importantly, it signifies a commitment to the life-long pursuit of excellence which compels me in providing a distinctive quality of care to patients. It is a great honor to be recognized for this achievement and be included in a group of Endodontists I have long admired.



**Matthew Kerner**  
Montreal, QC  
Canada  
Endodontic Program: Tufts University  
Graduated: 2010  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
It means a lot!

Becoming a Diplomate was a goal I very much wanted to achieve when I decided to specialize in endodon-

tics. It is a process in self-actualization and determination that I am proud to have accomplished. This is the marathon I am most happy to have completed. I will keep on training.

**Marc Kunin**  
Brooklyn, NY  
Endodontic Program: Rutgers School of Dental Medicine  
Graduated: 1988  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

It is a great privilege and honor to be counted amongst the Diplomates of the ABE. I now have a better appreciation for the evidence based literature and research that are the backbones of our specialty. Being a Diplomate has reinforced the importance of the commitment to lifelong learning. As the Associate Director of the endo program at Lutheran Medical Center, I can now serve as a more effective mentor and role model to our residents as they pursue Diplomate status. Having graduated from my program over a quarter century ago, when Kakehashi was current lit, starting to study for the exam was a daunting process. I could not have done it without the loving support of my family, and the constant encouragement of my mentor Dr. Marc Gimbel, Dr. Bob Goldberger, Dr. Margaret Mason and all my colleagues at Lutheran. Hopefully, other "seasoned" endodontists will see that it is possible to pass the Boards, no matter how long ago you graduated. It is never too late!

**Steven C. Kwan**  
Tukwila, WA  
Endodontic Program: University of Washington  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Achieving Board Certification means that I have accomplished the final step in my academic training and represents the culmination of many hours of hard work. Although I believe I will continue to grow as I progress through my professional career, becoming a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics is the completion of a goal set forth at the



start of residency. I would like to thank everyone who has mentored and supported me throughout this journey, especially my Program Director at the University of Washington, Dr. James Johnson, and my parents, Ed and Amy Kwan.

**Art Lamia**  
Port Jefferson, NY  
Endodontic Program: University of Michigan  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

To be a Diplomate for me, defines the quintessential stage in my early career as an endodontist; it was a journey and an achievement that was as exciting and fulfilling as it was in just beginning with the vision. This has been an incredible time in my life and our endodontic specialty as well. Without the support of the wonderful staff at the AAE and ABE, along with my director, faculty and co-residents at the University of Michigan, this seemingly overwhelming task might have been passed over; I can't thank you all enough for your guidance and patience. For those who consider embarking on this amazing journey, my advice is DO IT and you'll never look back. I plan now to help others achieve this milestone in any way I can, and mentoring will be the first step in the process.

**Tyler Lovelace**  
Oxford, MS  
Endodontic Program: University of Texas at San Antonio  
Graduated: 2010

**David A. Maixner**  
Omaha, NE  
Endodontic Program: University of Nebraska  
Graduated: 1997  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

I believe that achieving Diplomate status is the best tribute we can pay to our profession. The process increases our breadth of understanding and rationale regarding the treatment we provide on a day to day basis. I feel both patients and clinicians benefit from the accomplishment.





# Meet the New Diplomates



**Natanya Marracino**  
San Francisco, CA  
Endodontic Program: University of Illinois at Chicago  
Graduated: 2009  
**What does it mean to you to be**

## a Diplomate?

Becoming Board Certified confirms to me that with hard work and persistence you can achieve any goal you set your mind to. Becoming Board Certified is the pinnacle of our profession. It's not a requirement to practice, and because of this, it takes extra motivation, self-discipline and focus to achieve it. I definitely have felt inspired to stay on top of literature and advances in our specialty and feel an obligation to do so in the years to come. I couldn't have done it without all the help from my mentors, and the love and support of my family. I sincerely hope that I can inspire and mentor other prospective Candidates to do the same. While the process of becoming Board Certified involved a lot of time and sacrifice, it is a perfectly attainable goal and I strongly encourage all endodontists to pursue this endeavor.

## Jason Mathys

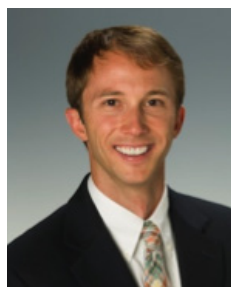
Beaufort, SC

Endodontic Program: Naval Postgraduate Dental School, Bethesda  
Graduated: 2013

## Justin McAbee

Charleston, SC

Endodontic Program: Medical University of South Carolina  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
Becoming a Diplomate is a reflection of the hard work and dedication it takes to reach the pinnacle of our profession. It allows us to provide the highest standard of care to our patients. This was a great challenge to complete, but satisfying to know that I was able to do it. This will be the basis for a lifetime of learning and challenges.



**Brian Meade Ypsilanti, MI**  
Endodontic Program: University of Minnesota  
Graduated: 2010  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Achieving Diplomate status means that I didn't

stop learning when I walked through the doors of my residency after graduation. It is a demonstration of my commitment to maintain an awareness of changes that are both relevant and beneficial to patient care. It is also the fulfillment of a goal I set for myself when I began my residency. I'm thrilled to have successfully completed the process.

## Brian G. Min

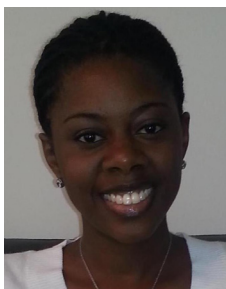
Torrance, CA

Endodontic Program: Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center  
Graduated: 2007  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
Earning Diplomate status means to finish one journey and embark on a new one. Working towards Board Certification challenged me even further to take my experience and knowledge to the next level. My academic journey and my recent achievement makes me more complete and equipped to benefit the patients I serve. Diplomate status is not my final destination, but a resource gained to excel my practice.



## Afua S. Mireku

Ellicott City, MD  
Endodontic Program: University of Maryland  
Graduated: 2007  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
Becoming a Diplomate is a great honor. It means that I have contributed to upholding endodontics as a specialty. It means that with a lot of hard work, motivation, and dedication, I have accomplished what I set out to



accomplish! This process truly deepened my commitment to life-long learning. I could not have done this alone. Behind every great accomplishment, there is always an entire community of supporters. I am so thankful for my family, my mentors and educators, and for God's endless blessings. To all of the current and future Candidates: set your goal, write it down, and commit to giving it 100%. The process may seem overwhelming, but just put one foot in front of the other, and before you know it, you will reach the finish line! You can do it!

## Marianella Natera-Fernandez

Milburn, NJ  
Endodontic Program: Rutgers School of Dental Medicine  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
My dream has always been to be an endodontist; and to become a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics was a goal that I had set for myself the moment I started my postgraduate program. To me, being a Diplomate means to hold oneself to the highest standards, to be an advocate for the specialty, and to be a role model for the next generation of endodontists. I am very grateful to Dr. Hirschberg, Dr. Gimbel, and Dr. Hartwell for their guidance and support. My efforts and achievements are dedicated to my family, especially my husband Felipe, and my daughter Isabella. Thank you for being there to witness this long journey.



## John Jeffrey Neal

Emerald Isle, NC  
Endodontic Program: Naval Postgraduate Dental School, Bethesda  
Graduated: 2010  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
Achieving Board Certification has been a very gratifying experience. After enduring the long certification process, it means a lot to me to be acknowledged by the best in our business. I would like to thank the Board Certified mentors (Drs. Patricia



# Meet the New Diplomates

Tordik, Terry Webb, Carol Weber and John Allemang) that have not only taught me, but also guided me through the Board Certification process. I look forward to contributing what I can to educate others, staying current on the latest advances in technology and continuing to improve and grow within the field of Endodontics.

**Bradley M. Newberry**  
Springfield, MO  
Endodontic Program: Loma Linda University  
Graduated: 2007

**Brian Nguyen**  
San Francisco, CA  
Endodontic Program: University of California, San Francisco  
Graduated: 2011

**Christopher A. Olson**  
Fort Smith, AR  
Endodontic Program: University of Louisville  
Graduated: 2011



**Michael R. Pauk**  
Nashua, NH  
Endodontic Program: Boston University  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

I am very thankful and proud to be a dentist. As an endo-

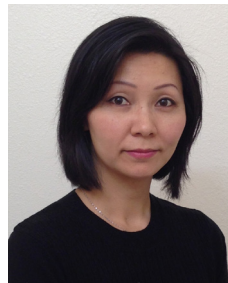
dontist, I felt it was important to complete my training by achieving Board Certification. I've dedicated my professional life to endodontics, and I want to be certain that I'm not only doing the best I can for my patients, but always doing what's best according to the current evidence. I also want to thank my wife for her support during the entire process.

**Brett Potter**  
El Paso, TX  
Endodontic Program: US Army Dental Activity, Fort Bragg  
Graduated: 2012

**Allen M. Pratt**  
Fairfield, CA  
Endodontic Program: Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center  
Graduated: 2013

**Phuong N. Quang**  
Oakland, CA  
Endodontic Program: University of Texas at San Antonio  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Before entering residency, I had made a promise to one of my mentors that I will strive to become a Diplomate of the ABE. While it has indeed been quite a challenge, I am proud to tell Dr. Harold Goodis that I have made it! I also have my residency faculty to thank for the excellent training I received. The process has reinforced the principles engrained in me as a clinician and researcher and emphasized the importance of practicing evidence-based endodontics. I am proud and honored to be a component of this elite group in our specialty.



**Steven Raphael**  
Springfield, MO  
Endodontic Program: University of Illinois at Chicago  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Becoming a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics is a great honor. It is the culmination of years of hard work and training. To me, being a Diplomate means making a commitment to constantly strive for excellence in my chosen profession, to stay abreast of the latest technology and research, and to always do my best to provide the highest level of care for every patient who walks through my door.



**Andrew M. Reff**  
Baltimore, MD  
Endodontic Program: St. Louis University  
Graduated: 2012  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**  
Achieving Diplomate status illus-

trates a commitment to myself, to my field, and to my patients. I would like to thank my wife, Stephanie for her encouragement throughout the studying process. I would also like to thank my Program Director, Dr. John Hatton, for providing me with a strong clinical and academic foundation at Saint Louis University. Your unique brand of mentorship continues to be appreciated.

**S. Craig Rhodes**  
Southlake, TX  
Endodontic Program: University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Graduated: 2010  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**



The term Diplomate refers to a person who has been granted a diploma. The word diploma originates from the Greek *diplōn*, meaning "to double". Initial use stems from ancient Rome where select veteran soldiers, non-Roman by birth, were granted Roman citizenship after many years of military service to the Empire. The honor was inscribed on doubled bronze tablets (the "diploma"), which served as an official state document. It was to be carried by the bearer; intended for all persons, institutions, or whomever may so inquire, attesting that the person named therein was to be afforded all the rights and privileges enjoyed by a citizen of Rome.

Despite what the Romans may have had in mind with the conferring of their diploma, I understand that my Diplomate status is neither intended, nor is it empowered, to afford me any special rights and/or privileges beyond those enjoyed by my board-eligible colleagues. On the contrary, in my mind becoming a Diplomate of the ABE serves to further convey upon me the additional duties of being a knowledgeable, responsible, ethical, and humble "citizen" of the specialty of endodontics. The certification process has served to inspire within myself a mandate



# Meet the New Diplomates

to constantly challenge personal clinical belief systems in the face of the inevitable uncertainty and occasional dissonance we experience as clinicians. To wit, Dr. Richard P. Feynman, the eminent American physicist, once elegantly stated this concept by saying:

"I can live with doubt and uncertainty and not knowing. I think it is much more interesting to live not knowing than to have answers that might be wrong. If we will only allow that, as we progress, we remain unsure, we will leave opportunities for alternatives. We will not become enthusiastic for the fact, the knowledge, the absolute truth of the day, but remain always uncertain ... In order to make progress, one must leave the door to the unknown ajar."

Although the literature informs us that improved patient outcomes are but tenuously tied to Board Certification, poll after poll of the lay public suggest that the vast majority of folks appear to seek out Board Certified professionals when choosing their own healthcare providers. Our ADA recognized specialty, one of only nine, is both enhanced and strengthened by those disciplined endodontists who voluntarily elect to make the necessary sacrifices in order to pursue Board Certification. The security and sanctity of the specialty's future, enjoyed and assumed by ALL endodontists both Diplomate and non-Diplomate alike, are in large part driven by the cumulative individual efforts of ABE Diplomates. To them I give hearty applause, and consequently challenge all current residents and board-eligible endodontists to join us in this important effort by making a personal commitment to becoming Board Certified.

I would like to thank my family for their support throughout this endeavor. My mentors and fellow UAB colleagues, Drs. Paul Eleazer and Larry Alley, deserve special mention and appreciation for taking a chance on me as a resident, as well as for their continuing leadership and encouragement. Thank you to my fellow faculty at Baylor, endodontics residents, and dental students who make every day a pleasure to be teaching. Last but not least, my gratitude goes to the ABE, the COD (and I want to specifically mention the value I obtained from both the review courses and the mentorship program – thank you Dr. Bruce Shulman), the AAE, and the countless number of behind-the-scenes individuals within each of these groups for their commitment toward supporting and continually improving the specialty of endodontics through Board Certification.

**Nikita Bharat Ruparel**  
San Antonio, TX  
Endodontic Program: University of Texas at San Antonio  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

I am highly honored to have achieved the distinguished Diplomate status. However, the strive for excellence will continue as I hope to practice evidence-based endodontics and as an educator advance the specialty by training future endodontists for the same. I am truly grateful to my mentors at UT San Antonio Dental School for providing not only the training for Board Certification but also inculcating the motivation to do only the best. I also thank the ABE for their efforts in mediating this process for all endodontists.



**Megan Rustad**  
Beverly Hills, CA  
Endodontic Program: University of Southern California  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

I feel honored to be recognized as a new Diplomate. It took a lot of hard work and dedication by myself, and patience and understanding by my husband, Tregg Rustad. However, achieving this honor actually raised more questions than answers. So to me, being a Diplomate, is the commitment to learning and adapting to the ever changing body of knowledge.

**Mina Saad**  
Altoona, PA  
Endodontic Program: University of Pennsylvania  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Being a Diplomate is a major milestone for me. I started working on the certification process since the beginning of my residency program. It reinforces the importance of the current



literature in our daily practice. It is a very rewarding feeling after a long journey in the dental field.

**Mark A. Schachman**  
Florham Park, NJ  
Endodontic Program: New York University  
Graduated: 1993  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomate?**

Becoming a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontists has completed a personal goal of mine achieving a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Taking on an endeavor such as this after completing my residency program over 20 years ago seemed unattainable without the encouragement of others around me. Becoming a Diplomate ensures that I will continue to give attention to detail, raise the bar of excellence in my profession and know my patients and students are receiving the best I can offer.

My thanks to the many residents that I have had the opportunity to teach and learn from over the years. I am grateful to Dr. Paul Rosenberg, my residency director, who has remained a mentor, friend and colleague and Dr. Gary Hartwell who gave me the encouragement, guidance and drive to pursue this goal.



**Brandon Seto**  
Santa Monica, CA  
Endodontic Program: University of Washington  
Graduated: 2011

**Felicity Shelton**  
Jackson, TN  
Endodontic Program: University of Maryland  
Graduated: 2010



# Meet the New Diplomates



**Scott D. Shwedel**  
Naples, FL  
Endodontic Program: Nova Southeastern University  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

The road to Diplomat status is long and not without its share of bumps. Looking back on the journey I feel a great sense of accomplishment and pride. Looking forward, I am excited about the road ahead that will be traveled as a Board Certified endodontist! Becoming a Diplomat means I have reached the "apex" of my profession... what more could an endodontist ask for?

**Lane Stephenson**  
Lincoln, NE  
Endodontic Program: University of Nebraska  
Graduated: 1994  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**



It validates my professional career and my commitment to doing my best at all times. As professionals, there is no one looking over our shoulder; it is up to us to critically self-assess and be brutally honest with ourselves and (not so brutally) our patients who entrust us with their care. It serves to give me confidence and credibility when consulted regarding endodontic issues. It is a reminder of my responsibility to the profession to serve as a role model to those who wish to practice endodontics and encourage them to pursue their Board Certification. I am also aware of the gaps in my knowledge and my continued quest for more.



**Calvin Suffridge**  
Jacksonville, FL  
Endodontic Program: Virginia Commonwealth University  
Graduated: 2002  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

Becoming a Diplomat means I accomplished the goal that I set for myself many years ago. I want to

thank my wife Tara for her unconditional support throughout this journey. I also want to thank my many friends and mentors over the years but especially CAPT Terry Webb, Dr. Gary Hartwell, Dr. Thomas Walker, and Dr. Charlie Jerome for their encouragement and assistance as I finished the process. I am very proud to be a Diplomat.

**Jeremy M. Thompson**  
El Paso, TX  
Endodontic Program: US Army Dental Activity, Fort Gordon  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

The process of achieving Diplomat status has been variably frustrating and rewarding. I have appreciated the opportunity to develop and refine my diagnosis and treatment rationale while staying grounded with the real experts in this field. I'm also looking forward to having a colorful ribbon on my nametag at the annual meeting.

**Valerie Tom-Kun Yamagishi**  
North York, ONTARIO  
Endodontic Program: University of Toronto  
Graduated: 2011



**Casey L. Turner**  
Southlake, TX  
Endodontic Program: University of Minnesota  
Graduated: 2007  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

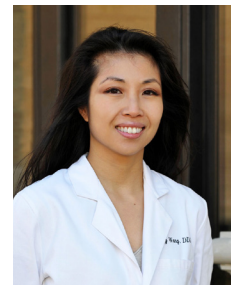
The Board Certification process is one of the most challenging but most rewarding journeys I have taken. To be a Diplomat, means that I have reached the ultimate goal of my career; further challenging me to continue to hold myself to the highest standards that our specialty requires. It is an honor, a privilege and a responsibility that I am grateful to have achieved. Thank you to all of those who have been supportive in my journey!

**Emily Weldon Tyler**  
St. Augustine, FL  
Endodontic Program: Tufts University  
Graduated: 2011  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**



Becoming a Diplomat means a great deal to me both personally and professionally. It demonstrates not only my commitment to the specialty of endodontics, but also my desire to continuously learn and provide the highest level of care to my patients.

**Stephen L. Walker**  
Mesa, AZ  
Endodontic Program: University of Detroit Mercy  
Graduated: 2010



**Sandy Wang**  
Dallas, TX  
Endodontic Program: University of California, San Francisco  
Graduated: 2013  
**What does it mean to you to be a Diplomat?**

It took careful consideration to go back to residency because that meant moving out of state for 3 years and leaving private practice after 9 years. But it was worth it. Likewise going through the 3 step process to become Board Certified was also quite challenging and actually a bit daunting as it is not my greatest strength to face examiners that I know are at the pinnacle of our field. In the end to succeed when it takes effort and preparation makes the reward so much more meaningful. Thus being granted and welcomed as a fellow Diplomat is my greatest professional honor that has ever been bestowed me.

**Keivan Zoufan**  
Cupertino, CA  
Endodontic Program: University of Connecticut  
Graduated: 2010



# President's Message

*continued from page 1*

These changes include eliminating a time restriction on the Written Examination. Once a Candidate has successfully passed the written examination, there is no expiration of the results. One is only required to re-establish eligibility to continue the other steps in the process. Endodontic residents, who are graduating and will receive their endodontic certificate in the same calendar year, are able to challenge the Written Examination in May of the year in which they will receive their endodontic certificate. The written examination is given through Pearson-Vue testing centers which has testing centers strategically located around the world.

Changes to the Case History Portfolio Examination include reduction of the number of cases from 15 to 10, and elimination of the one year recall for the Diagnosis Case, and the Medically Compromised Case. Also changed was the requirement for the Medically Compromised Case to be a mandatory case. The Case Portfolio Examination submissions are now electronic. The new Digital Case History Portfolio submission website can be accessed at <http://www.amboard-endo.org>. The digital submission of case portfolios will improve the ease of submitting portfolios, as a Candidate will no longer need to print out forms, images, supporting documentation and assemble a physical portfolio only to have it shipped to the ABE office in Chicago. Candidates can now register and submit their entire portfolio online.

The Oral Examination is now given in St. Louis at the American Board of Orthodontics Testing Center. This allows for a more standardized examination that is more convenient and uniform for all of the Candidates. The Board is now conducting the Oral Examination twice a year and administering it to up to 200 Candidates per year.

These changes have made the Board Certification process more straight forward, and certainly doable. The ABE website has the latest information on the policies and procedures required for the examination process. It is the only location that has updated and accurate information concerning this process, and the answers to your questions.

It has been a distinct honor to serve with my fellow Directors on the American Board of Endodontics. These individuals are a unique group who strive for excellence in all aspects of the Board's responsibilities. They spend immeasurable hours prepar-

ing, administering and grading examinations, conducting the Board's business, and upholding the prestige of the Board. Through all of this, their goal is a fair and impartial process that ultimately will ensure the success of all the Candidates in a collegial and friendly manner. The focus and dedication of these individuals is unrivaled.

These long hours spent by Directors of the American Board of Endodontics are only exceeded by the dedicated ABE Staff, who are the Candidate's best friends, guiding them and encouraging them, as they proceed through the process. All Candidates should be eternally grateful to the compassionate, caring ABE Staff of Ms. Margie Hannen, the ABE Executive Secretary, and Ms. Ivana Bevacqua, the ABE Communications Manager.

With the success of increasing the number of Candidates challenging the Board, it is apparent that the current Directors of the ABE could not administer that number of examinations without the devotion and time given by former Directors of the American Board of Endodontics. These ladies and gentlemen willingly give their time, experience, and expertise allowing more Candidates to be examined, and to achieve Diplomate status with the ABE. Our thanks goes out to the former ABE Directors for their efforts on behalf of the ABE process.

So, to all, if you are a Diplomate, we thank you for your dedication and concern for our specialty. If you are not yet a Diplomate, why are you waiting? If you are a new Diplomate, congratulations, thank you for stepping up for endodontics, and welcome.



## The Diplomat

American Board of Endodontics Newsletter

Editors: Dr. Scott McClanahan &

Dr. Cindy R. Rauschenberger

c/o The American Board of Endodontics

211 E. Chicago Avenue, Suite 1100

Chicago, IL 60611

## The 2015 ABE Board of Directors



*From left to right (Back Row) Drs. Stephen Davis, Craig Noblett and Asgeir Sigurdsson (Middle Row) Drs. Van Himel, Cindy Rauschenberger and Scott McClanahan (Front Row) Drs. Karl Keiser, James Johnson and Donna J. Mattscheck.*