

Historical Perspective

Through April, 1993, the *Journal of Endodontics* will continue to feature addresses and/or profiles of all 49 AAE past presidents. Begun in 1991, this feature is intended to give members insight into the history and movement of the AAE and endodontics as a specialty, as we approach the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the AAE.



Alfred L. Frank, DDS
Past President, 1974-75

I'm personally grateful for the privilege of preparing this message regarding the past history of the American Association of Endodontists. It prompted a reflection of years long past and their many delightful memories. Know that I am writing this, wearing a warm smile, recollecting so many wonderful moments and basking in the countless friendships developed, which will always remain treasured.

I was asked to relate the experiences that took place during my year as President in 1974-75. However, I feel compelled to relate first the aura of the AAE in my initial exposure to this incredible organization which, in a very short time, altered my professional life.

The first meeting that I attended was in 1956 or 1957 at the suggestion of Dudley Glick. Dudley was aware of my interest in endodontics within my general practice. The development of our friendship was already well on its way, following our meeting at an Alpha Omega function. The more we got to know each other, the more our friendship flourished. I can honestly say that, to this day, it continues to grow and I'm confident that it will never stop. Although Dudley had often suggested it, at the time I had no intention of limiting my practice to endodontics. I enjoyed my general practice much too much!

I met Jose Oynick at this first meeting which was of course held in Chicago following the mid-winter meeting. Pepe later arranged an endodontic "pilgrimage" prior to the next AAE meeting, visiting the offices of some endodontic giants, including Louis Grossman, Harold Maxmen, Mike Auerbach and others. Bert Wolfsohn invited me to visit his office after the meeting, which of course I did. Needless to say, I was hooked from then on, totally grateful to my special friends, Dudley and Pepe.

The meeting from the very start was different from any dental meeting that I had attended or experienced. It was without a doubt the accumulation of many different personalities all devoted to the same mission and goal: to improve the development of endodontic practice and concepts. All of the leaders in endodontics were present, ready and, more importantly, anxious to share the knowledge and experience they'd developed through the years. They were subtly different from most of the lecturers I had listened to in the past. Not only were they great teachers, they were also anxious to listen and learn as students. The AAE gave all in attendance the chance to learn from each other by interrelating. It seemed that practically everyone was starving for information. To miss a meeting was like practicing in a vacuum.

An important part of the meeting was the bull sessions which took place after the scheduled programs and continued until late in the evening. A unique relationship developed between many sharing a common bond to improve their understanding of endo.

John Ingle stated that "in the early years the programs were made up of AAE members speaking to each other," adding that he "often took a beating for speaking about failures." This deserves explanation.

The lecture sessions were truly a highlight of each meeting. Each lecture was followed by a question and answer period, giving those in the audience the opportunity to disagree. Often, the lecture room became an arena. In spite of being friends, the attacks and rebuttals were quite direct and challenging. Interestingly, friendship prevailed.

I was indeed honored for the privilege of serving as a president in the American Association of

Endodontists. There were many important events that took place during the 1974-75 years, thanks to the other officers and committee members.

January 1975 will always be remembered as a most important moment in the history of the AAE. Dr. Worth Gregory brought to fruition the birth of the first issue of the *Journal of Endodontics*, to which he had devoted so much arduous effort for an endless period of time. Total subscriptions hoped for were far surpassed. The *JOE* became financially secure in its very first year of publication, not requiring subsidization by the American Dental Association as anticipated. We will always be grateful to Worth for making a dream become a reality.

Another highlight of the year was the accomplishment of the Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the Use of Paraformaldehyde Paste-Type Materials, chaired by Dr. Dudley H. Glick. Endodontics and dentistry will always be appreciative.

The year 1974 saw the expiration of the "grandfather clause" for educational waiver candidates of the American Board of Endodontics.

The Executive Committee (now called the Board of Directors) of 1974-75 and myself will always be proud for having had the opportunity to serve the American Association of Endodontists.

Dr. Frank, a former Clinical Professor of Graduate Endodontics at the University of Southern California for over 30 years, is a Professor of Endodontics at Loma Linda University. He is a recipient of the AAE's Coolidge and Sommer Awards as well as the Louis Grossman International Award of the French Endodontic Society. Since retiring from active practice in 1987, Dr. Frank continues to teach and lecture throughout the world.