

2024 Volume 05

SAN DIEGO COUNTY DENTAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

Facets

MAGAZINE



SIDE GIGS
in *Dentistry*

Dental Practices for Sale

Ken Rubin, pioneer Dental CPA/Advisor, national lecturer & author has successfully sold **over 500 San Diego** Dental practices!

As you know **Experience** really does matter, Doctor!

Before signing any listing agreement **feel free to call Ken himself** to find out what you'll wish you would have known.

POWAY Superb location in large retail shopping center. 21 years of goodwill. Most specialty procedures being referred out. Room for growth.

CORONADO Located in a newly remodeled professional building. 6 ops. Associate in place if you want a second practice. Office has Cerec, CT scan, and Itero. Opportunity to own the real estate with 24 years of goodwill. Excellent location. Practice is flourishing but room for growth with additional procedures. New CT Scan in place.

LA JOLLA/UTC 8 ops in this well established practice. Plenty of room to add in house specialists to see patients. Long term loyal well trained staff.

OCEANSIDE Standalone corner building on busy street. 6 ops with room to grow. Office has a very relaxed vibe to it which matches its proximity to the beach. Opportunity to own real estate!

LA JOLLA/UTC Located in a very professional/medical building close to the hospital. Practice has plenty of room for growth with insurance added. Has a small but loyal FFS patient population. A must see!

MISSION VALLEY Excellent location. Many specialty procedures being referred out. Overhead is very reasonable. Office has an associate in place so this could be a great second office for you.

MIRAMAR/MIRA MESA Excellent location just off the 15 fwy. Most all specialty procedures being referred out. Opportunity to own the real estate!

SAN DIEGO PERIO One of San Diego's top perio priced for wise purchase decision for sale. Seller willing to associate back for a smooth transition. Practice is very well appointed and in a magnificent professional building. Come take a look!

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Facets

MAGAZINE

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STRENGTHENING *our* PROFESSION

LEADERSHIP,
ADVOCACY, AND
COMMUNITY
IN ACTION

It's remarkable how swiftly the year has flown by! Our Society has diligently worked to offer members valuable benefits while striving towards our strategic goals like advocacy, career development, mentorship, well-being, networking, and leadership enhancement.

My role in the leadership team has spurred both my professional and personal growth. The exchange of experiences within this community not only keeps us engaged but also effectively involved in our profession's broader scope.

In terms of side gigs, I've taken on roles as a Poll Worker for the San Diego Registry of Voters to understand our voting system better – which I believe is fair – and as a Dental Examiner for ADEX. These positions have been incredibly rewarding, allowing me to stay connected with my field and my community.

As we look ahead, let's continue to embrace these opportunities for growth and change within our Society. ♦

MESSAGE
FROM
SDCDS
PRESIDENT

OCTOBER

LILIA
LARIN, DDS



VOLUNTEERING *The Side Gig That Gives Back*

Growing up, my mom's unconventional approach to parenting shaped who I am today. She believed in teaching lessons through experience rather than punishment. When I broke rules—like sneaking out or neglecting chores—her response was not to ground me but to have me volunteer in our community.

At first, I resisted. The thought of spending my Saturday at the local food bank felt like an unfair consequence. However, each time, I found myself immersed in a world beyond my own. Sorting donations and serving meals, I encountered people with stories and struggles that put my own transgressions into perspective. Volunteering became not just a lesson in accountability but a source of personal fulfillment. Little did I know then, volunteering would become my lifelong side gig.

My current side gig is a volunteer board member for the Children's Dental Health Association (CDHA). This incredible non-profit organization was established

in 1952 and dedicates itself to providing dental services and education to underserved children in San Diego. The School-Based Program and Orthodontic Program serve over 3000 children a year. In my many years as a volunteer, I have to say that this gig is one of the best. I share my ideas, offer assistance with small clerical tasks to help out the staff, and help organize events. It's a well-oiled engine that has been in motion for generations. I allocate about 1 hour a week to the CDHA and I get so much more in return!

Today, I volunteer regularly, not out of obligation, but as a way to encourage growth and connection in my life.

If you are interested in giving your time to the Children's Dental Health Association, we are looking for volunteers to help in many ways. Please e-mail Dr. Chris Pham at chrispham@gmail.com to discuss ways that you can be part of this great organization. ♦

MESSAGE
FROM
SDCDS
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

OCTOBER

ANGELA
LANDSBERG



MESSAGE
FROM
SAN DIEGO
COUNTY CHIEF
DENTAL OFFICER

OCTOBER

**FADRA WHYTE,
DMD, MPH**



WE ASKED, YOU ANSWERED!

Thank you to our dental community

Dear Members of the San Diego County Dental Society,

On behalf of the County of San Diego, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to each of you for your valuable participation in our recent Medi-Cal listening sessions/survey. Your insights, expertise, and feedback are crucial as we work together to enhance and improve dental care services for Medi-Cal recipients in our community.

Your contributions will play a key role in my work to ensure that the needs of both patients and providers are better met. We appreciate the time you took out of your busy schedule and thoughtful engagement you brought to these discussions.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration in the future.

As always please feel free to reach out to me anytime by email or phone. ♦

CELL: 619-455-0569

EMAIL: FADRAM.WHYTE@SDCOUNTY.CA.GOV

CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER

MEDICAL CARE SERVICE-HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITY



Toy Drive!

HERE'S HOW YOU
CAN SUPPORT
THOSE IN NEED
DURING THE
HOLIDAY SEASON

Want to do something fun for some children in need that you don't even know? Has it been a while since you had a new story to tell on your website? Sponsor a toy drive in your office for the Christmas season. This year we are again donating toys and bicycles to an organization called Support the Enlisted Project. Our young local military families need your help to make Christmas a joyous occasion and here is your opportunity to help. Shoot me

an email and we will drop off a collection box and pick it up mid December. Send out an email blast to your patients letting them know to drop off an unwrapped toy and take pictures for your website. Your patients will love this as you help support our local military families. All your efforts will be greatly appreciated and god bless.

Kevin Kenny (email Patriotscsd@gmail.com)

Why

WE NEED
SOMETHING

Beyond

the Dental Chair

IN OUR LIVES



Let me just start by saying that the theme of this issue is a personal one for me. I love this profession. I love the impact we can have on our patients' lives. I've been retired for 7 years and even after all that time I still have dreams where I am holding a handpiece. I miss my patients, I miss the pursuit and challenges of the day to day every day.

Maybe my perspective is different from most dentists since I've retired. I have had to have the experience of figuring out what it is that I am BEYOND being a dentist. I've done that work and am in the process of making that happen. (Stay tuned) That being said, I will emphatically state that dentistry absolutely cannot be the ONLY thing in our lives.

Yes. I said that. Dentistry can't be the only thing in our lives. By holding onto that belief, we put ourselves straight into the path of burnout.

When I was a student at Pacific, whether it was directly said or implied, there was a belief system that we need to be passionate about dentistry. If we weren't passionate with a capi-

tal P about dentistry, we must be deficient or lacking in some way. I used to think it was my interpretation of what we were taught, but the longer I've been out of dental school, the more I've heard that refrain from colleagues from other schools.

I have a friend, Dr. Laura Brenner, D.D.S., who wrote a now viral Facebook post some years back, titled, "10 Reasons Why Your Dentist Hates You Too." I know her and understand the space in which she wrote this article. It was one of the most honest pieces of writing about dentistry I had read at that point in my life. She has, over the years, written about this very topic. She has since left clinical dentistry, but remains within the profession as a career coach. (Disclaimer-I worked with her in figuring out my next career steps) She has started a Facebook group called Dentist Side Gigs which was the inspiration for this issue.

I bring this up because in expressing some ambivalence about her frustration and lack of fulfillment in dentistry, she was attacked for it, by some pretty big names in the dental consulting world.

But, she was right.

Let's face it. Dentistry is a way we earn our living, a means to an end. I'm married to an engineer. He doesn't believe that being an engineer is what defines him. And he's a pretty phenomenal engineer. He has that other thing, music. That is what keeps him going day in and day out. It's not engineering.

"What is it about dentistry that leads us to hold onto that belief system, that dentistry is what defines us?"

What is it about dentistry that leads us to hold onto that belief system, that dentistry is what defines us? Is it pride in all it has taken for us to get here? Is it fear that it isn't enough? Or is it a little bit of both? Is it any wonder that holding onto that belief that dentistry is all-encompassing, we put ourselves straight into the path of burnout?

According to Adam Borland PsyD at the Cleveland Clinic, one way that we can defend ourselves against burnout is by creating meaningful boundaries between our work and our personal lives. Pursuing things outside of our professional lives, whether that is in the form of a hobby or an additional professional pursuit, requires thought and purpose. That very act of setting that boundary separates us from the constant grind we feel as dentists.

I attended this month's Cut Your Teeth event at Bivouac Cider House and Adventure Lodge. If you haven't attended one of these events, please do so! It is such a fun way to build community among our colleagues! The owner of Bivouac is a former attorney (she worked as a homi-

cide prosecutor in Washington D.C., for the FBI, and was a US attorney here in San Diego) before transitioning away from law and into cider making. She took her "side gig" and turned it into a thriving business. And her passion for what she does emanated from her in a way that the law never did.

We as the editorial board hope you enjoy reading about our colleagues in their side pursuits. Some have made it their main career, others continue to practice but find meaning in their life beyond the dental chair. And we hope that it will inspire you to pursue some of those other things that will bring meaning into your life! ♦

Megan with Husband, Peter, hiking Stonewall Peak.



Megan with daughters Evelyn (top) and Avery (below) in the audience at Sarah McLachlan and YoYoMa.

EDITORIAL

Written By:
Megan Clarke, DDS

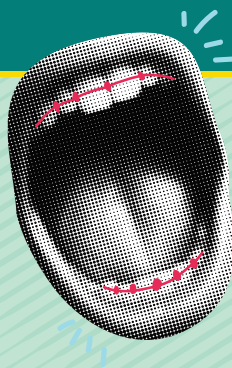




San Diego County
DENTAL SOCIETY

CUT YOUR TEETH

SEPT 26TH
EVENT RECAP



THANK YOU

To all members who attended our
last Cut Your Teeth and made
the event a great success!



NOV
21ST
6:30PM - 9:00PM

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT CUT YOUR TEETH INDUSTRY EVENT!

Don't miss out on the chance to connect with other dental
professionals at our next Cut Your Teeth. Tickets on sale now at
sdcds.org/events/



The *Well-Being* Committee: An Overlooked Resource for Dental Professionals

ONE OF THE LESSER KNOWN and underutilized benefits of membership in the dental society is assistance from the Well Being Committee. This committee is composed of dedicated volunteers who are specialists in Addictive Disorder, ready, willing, and able to render help whenever needed. The Well Being program is now State-wide, even national, with committees in most States to render assistance when needed. The interesting part to me is that San Diego was the premier (Sp. Primero) program in the nation, a brainchild of our mentor, the late Dr. Gale Kloeffer, in the early 80's. He designed a program to help impaired colleagues, and in the process with compliance, protect the colleague from disciplinary action by the Board of Dentistry. Since 1982, most State Dental Societies have adopted the basics of this program, helping any and all colleagues with a need for guidance.

Our committee receives referrals from colleagues facing difficulties, concerned office staff wanting their employer to get help, and family

members who are severely concerned. We have undertaken intervention interviews from all of these referral sources. Our reward, payback, is the smiles on the faces of gratitude and freedom from enslavement. A report from the ADA I read today mentioned that 46% of members are unaware of the availability of this kind of assistance. We want all members and staff to know we are here to help; we want you to know about us. We are the Well Being committee, free of charge for professional guidance where help is needed, for members and non-members.

Most of the time, education is prevention. There are exceptions that educated people still incur harm. Even patients we educate continue to snack sugary snacks and drink damaging liquids, while a few comply. In spite of this, we want you to have access to education and obtain knowledge about the disease of addiction. Many experience symptoms but deny any possibility of being in a precarious lifestyle.

We highly recommend you each consider this a very important part of practice management. Check the websites, take some approved CE courses, you will be amazed at the enlightenment provided to your professional and personal life. For every case we evaluate and help in our committee, more than 40 others are affected by their disease. We are here to help; our payback is your health and well-being. ♦

RESOURCES

Courses at these two organizations are both free and approved AGD providers of CE:

Providers Clinical Support System
pcssnow.org

**American Academy of
Addiction Psychiatry**
Providing free courses and giving
treatment recommendations to
professionals
aaap.org



Written By:
Ronald E. Fritz, DDS, MPH
Former Chair, current member
Well Being committee, SDCDS



MEMBERSHIP *Milestones*

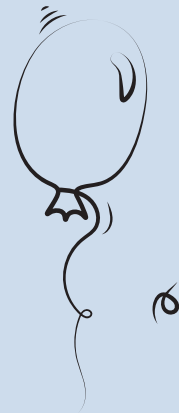
We on the editorial board of Facets try our best to bring you all great content with the utmost care. The last issue of Facets was our milestone issue. We included all members' milestones except those whose membership has spanned 50 years. So here they are. We congratulate you on your contributions to the profession and for your commitment to organized dentistry.

50

years

Ronald Aanerud, DDS
Ben Anella, DDS
Thomas Brassington, DDS
Lawrence Buss, DDS
William Combs, DDS
Wayne Dean, DDS
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John Taddey, DDS
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Peter Umekubo, DDS
Thomas Waddell, DDS
Robert Weigel, DDS
Paul Zinn, DDS





The Side Hustle AFTER A LIFE OF DENTISTRY

INSIDE AND PERSONAL: THE SECRET
LIFE OF DR. CHRIS KLEBER

I had the privilege of interviewing a member of our dental society and fellow dentist recently, Dr. Chris Kleber. He is a busy guy with many fingers in many "pies," but he is dedicated to Dentistry and to his fellow man. I am honored to have him as a friend and colleague.

Chris spent three years in the US Navy and then had two practices in the past. One in El Cajon and another in Coronado, where he presently resides. He worked in the Coronado office for over 11 years, until he retired due to an old injury, eventually selling both his practices. He has a grown son and daughter.

His passion for cars piqued his interest in re-inventing a "turnkey" car business. Chris began to manufacture fiberglass bodies and matching chassis for classic 356 Porsche Speedsters, Coupes, and the 550 Spyder replica cars. He found a niche and filled it working with his son. He and his son sell these kits all over the world and especially in North America. He works with a factory in Tijuana, Mexico to fabricate his designs and orders.

His other passions include being a member of the Coronado Rotary International Club, raising money for Alzheimer's research, Homebrewing beer, being a Docent at the USS Midway Museum, and golf, as well as travelling to play golf. He told me that this last item on his "hit list" is one that involves his lovely wife, Barbara, because they like to travel together and play golf. (I did not ask who drives the farthest!)

Chris is a 20-year-old member of the Quaff Club (Quality Ale and Fermentation Fraternity). He loves to brew "whatever brew comes along," and does so for Rotary events, and for benefits of all kinds and then some. Chris still maintains his dental license and has been designated a life member of the SDCDS since his initial membership in 1981.

I asked Chris the one thing he likes to do more than anything and his response was quick and simply said, "I like to smile...." Chris has been through a lot of traumatic issues in his life and has managed to overcome them. He seems strong, adventurous, forward directed, and empathic. He is a good man to get to know...In closing I asked Chris about his philosophy of life, and he read me the following poem: "Expect the Best... Prepare for the Worst!" ♦

**"The clock of life
is wound but once,
And no man has
the power
To tell just when
the hands will stop
At late or early
hour.**

**To lose one's
wealth is sad
indeed,
To lose one's
health is more,
To lose one's soul
is such a loss
That no man can
restore.**

**The present only
is our own,
So live, love, toil
with a will,
Place no faith in
"Tomorrow,"
For the Clock
may then be
still."**



Written By:
Eric Shapira, DDS,
MAGD, MA, MHA

SDCDS ANNUAL OKTOBERFEST



Never miss a beat!

Stay up-to-date with upcoming
events at sdcds.org/events.





San Diego County
DENTAL SOCIETY

A Night in **MONTE CARLO**

Celebrate the end of the year
and the accomplishments of
SDCDS Leadership.

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 7**

5280 CARROLL
CANYON RD

6:00 PM - 9:30 PM

**CASINO GAMES - DINNER
WINE & BEER - AWARDS**

Register now at sdcds.org/events

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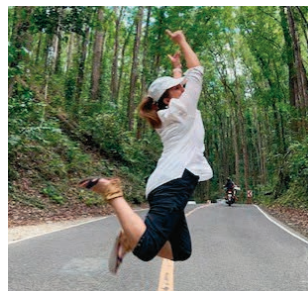
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MEET DR.

Virginia Mattson

OUR INCOMING
PRESIDENT OF
SDCDS 2025



Written By:
Megan Clarke, DDS

Tell me about yourself.

I am originally from the Philippines. I graduated from Centro Escolar University in Manila in 1983. My mother was an alumna of 1953. It was one of the oldest schools in the country, established in 1907. It is one of the top universities in the nation and is highly recognized for its health sciences programs especially Dentistry.

I had the same pathway as the rest of the foreign graduate students in the early 80's! When I immigrated to the States, I couldn't use my license to practice Dentistry. I had to find ways to earn a living, learn a new lifestyle, speak colloquial phrases to fit in and navigate how to start to get my dental license here. Having to pass the National Boards Parts I and II was difficult because it meant I had to take refresher courses to remember what I had learned six years ago. One had to pass the National Board exams first to take the Bench test which was the Restorative Technique Test for only foreign dentists. I passed that with flying colors! I then proceeded to take the California State Dental Board exam which was very expensive for me. I was working as a full time registered dental assistant all through these trying times while raising a young family. Finally getting my California license was a culmination of all the hardships and trials of proving oneself and the beginning of a new challenge....

I worked as an associate for several years until I opened my own practice from scratch. Someone once said, "you cannot do it on your own!" That made me work even harder and 28 years later... Here we are!!

Who would you say has been the biggest role model/ most influential person in your life?

My mother! When I was younger, I spent the summers working with her in her clinic. I was one of the few people that knew already in High school what they wanted to be when they grew up! She never pushed me into Dentistry, but she gave me enough exposure that I grow to love it.

If you could do anything other than Dentistry, what would it be?

I would love to be a flight stewardess! I would have loved to work for Pan Am back in the day. Oh, those uniforms!!

Are you married? Do you have kids?

I have been happily married to Steve for 28 amazing years! We have 2 adult children. David is 34 and Moorea is 26 years old, married to Ramon who is in the Navy and currently deployed in Asia. We have a grand dog, chocolate lab named Moose.

What do you enjoy doing outside of Dentistry? (hobbies, volunteers, etc.)

I work out 2-3 times a week at the gym. I enjoy walking and hiking. My husband and I hiked the TMB (Tour du Mont Blanc) not too long ago. It is one of the most popular long- distance walks in Europe. It circles the Mont Blanc massif, covering over 100 miles from France to Italy to Switzerland through wilderness and back to France for 10 days. That was an amazing trip!

I join the SDFDA (San Diego Filipino Dental Association) and NAFDA (National Association of Filipino

Dentists in America) on their annual dental mission in the Philippines around February/ March. We provide dental extractions, cleanings, restorative, oral hygiene instructions, etc., livelihood/ feeding programs, slippers/ reading glasses, rice and canned goods distributions. We give monetary donations to pediatric cancer patients and help with cleft lip/ palate hospitalization.

I am currently the president elect of the San Diego County Dental Society. I am also a member of the Editorial, Recruitment and Retention, Continuing Education, Ethics, and Legislative Boards. I am the chair of Governance Task Force. My plate is full! I like to be busy, and I enjoy networking and meeting new people.

What are your plans for the dental society during your tenure?

I want to be able to connect and communicate to as many dentists as possible. I would start with the D3, D4 dental students even before they graduate. I want to help them recognize what different pathways they can take and possibly mentor them if they are going to the route of wanting to become a solo practice/ business owner like me.

As a Filipino woman, foreign graduate and a minority, I represent dentists of different races and ethnic backgrounds. Diversity encompasses gender, ability, religion, race, origin, identity and sexual orientation. We must be welcoming if we want to increase our membership and be open to change. We need to have clarity of the mission and vision of the society, and transparency for members to trust leadership.

We need to care and advocate for our profession, care for our patients and colleagues alike. ♦

VIRGINIA'S CONTACT:

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Mobile # 858-922-6232

"Someone once said, "you cannot do it on your own!" That made me work even harder and 28 years later... Here we are!!"

Let Me Introduce...

Please meet Dr. Laudy Espindola.

Let Me Introduce is an ongoing column featured in Facets to introduce us to the many members that make up the depth and breadth of the San Diego County Dental Society. We hope you enjoy getting to know your colleagues better.

Written by: **Malieka Johnson, DDS**

I was first introduced to Dr. Espindola on the editorial board for Facets. I had the pleasure of interviewing her and in the process discovered we are in many ways like sisters from another mister. I connected with her creative musical spirit and her passion for service. Her perspective as a foreign trained dentist may resonate with others. I hope you enjoy meeting her as much as I have. Please meet Dr. Laudy Espindola:



Dental Clinic volunteer service with Fresh Start Surgical Gifts. At Dr. Christina Bartsch's Dental office.



**Where are you from originally?
Where did you grow up?**

I was born in Colombia and lived most of my childhood in Bogota D.C. Colombia is a unique country, well known for the kindness of its people, flavorful food, and exotic landscapes. Cartagena De Indias, Medellin, and Bogota are worldwide known cities and three of the most popular tourism destinations in South America. All of my family is still in Colombia.

Are you from a big, medium-sized, or small family?

I am from a medium-sized family; I have one older sister and one little brother. Even though my brother is not that little anymore, he will always be my spoiled little sibling since I am 13 years older than him. An internal joke in my family has always been about how my brother didn't get one mom but three instead.

What was one of your favorite childhood memories or activities?

I have always been a music lover. Since I was 5 years old, I have learned how to play numerous instruments. I started with the piano, then the guitar, the drums and finally the flute. I played in a music academy for several years. Therefore, I could say playing an instrument was by far my favorite childhood activity and still is as an adult. I still play but not as much as in the past.

Where did you complete your undergraduate studies? What did you major in?

In Colombia the school system is different, and we don't have to get a bachelor's degree. After high school, we go straight to dental school, medical school, law school, etc.

What was your "aha" coming to dentistry moment? How did you choose this fine profession?

I wanted a profession that could evoke feelings like joy, happiness, optimism, and hope in others. At some point I considered becoming a professional musician, but over time I realized how much need was in the community, particularly in the healthcare field. Since in my family there are no other dentists, at the beginning I was not very familiar with the profession. When I started searching for healthcare professional options, dentistry as an option came to my hands. I went to a pre-dental day meeting, and it was

love at first sight. I realized that it was what I was looking for and suddenly all the pieces fit together.

Deep inside me, I knew music was a gift I received, it was inside me and it was going to be there forever. On the other hand, I knew if I wanted to do dentistry, I had to learn, to study hard, and to get out of my comfort zone.

Now, as a foreign-trained dentist I cannot wait to have my U.S dental license and evoke in people the same feelings music can, but through dentistry in the U.S.

Where did you attend dental school? What year did you graduate?

I studied dentistry at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, Colombia, and I graduated as a dentist in 2015.

What do you love most about dentistry?

I love the transformation dentistry brings in someone's life. In some cases, it would take just one dental appointment to change a person's life forever. The opportunity dentists have of making a meaningful impact with their hands is one of a kind. On top of that, my favorite thing about dentistry is how it combines science, art, and patient care.

Where are you in the process of obtaining licensure?

I am in the process of getting my dental license here in the U.S. As a foreign-trained dentist, this is an



extremely competitive, challenging, and long process. Even though there is more than one path to get your license, most of them would include going back to dental school for a predoctoral program or a postdoctoral clinical residency. However, if someone chooses to go for the postdoctoral program, it will require some state-related dental license limitations. I took the INBDE and TOFEL and I plan to apply for advanced standing next year. I am trying to improve my CV as much as I can.

Are you married? Have kids?

Yes, I married the love of my life eight years ago, and we have 3 little girls together. They are five years, two years and two months old. Our girls are the happiness and joy in our home. I just couldn't imagine a life without them.

What do you enjoy doing outside of dentistry? - Family, Hobbies, Talents, volunteering, etc.

I enjoy spending time with my husband and my little girls. Our favorite activity is going to Coronado Island and spending the afternoon at the beach or going to the zoo.

Outside of dentistry, one of my biggest passions is to give back to the community. I really enjoy helping others and making a positive impact in their lives. The truth is that we won't know which circumstances others are living in, their story or grief. So why not help them out somehow? Even if you think that helping in volunteer services helps someone in a very small or insignificant way, this service could touch someone's life in a way that we could not even imagine.

I have volunteered in multiple organizations, such as the San Diego Blood Bank, Operation Gratitude in California, and other dental related organizations.

In 2023, I received the U.S President's





Dr. Espindola volunteering with Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures, offering free dental screenings, educational materials, and treatment referrals for kids.



Dr. Espindola volunteering with the San Diego Blood Bank at the Port of San Diego Holiday Bowl Parade.

"The opportunity dentists have of making a meaningful impact with their hands is one of a kind."

Volunteer Service Award, Gold level. The President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) is a national honor offered in recognition of the United States' most exceptional volunteers. This award honors individuals who are committed to a high level of voluntarism and service, and is classified into bronze, silver or gold based on the number of hours of service the individual provided.

Furthermore, I was profusely honored when I also received a Letter of appreciation from The White House signed by the President of the United States Joseph R. Biden, for my volunteer leadership and service to the country. These recognitions were a testimony to the life-changing and positive impact we can have on others.

What is one thing on your life bucket list that you have fulfilled and one thing yet to be fulfilled?

Without a doubt one thing that was fulfilled in my bucket list, was to pass the Integrated National Board Dental Examination (INBDE) last year. I studied for five months non-stop, from seven am to seven pm, Monday to Friday. The INBDE not only puts to the test your academic and clinical knowledge, but your willpower and mental strength.

On the other hand, one thing to be fulfilled on my list (not dentistry related) would be to learn how to play

the cello. I have always wanted to play this extremely beautiful instrument. The cello has one of the most expansive ranges of any instrument. Since its range has more than four octaves, it can go from bass to soprano. As a result, you can play very high notes (like the violin), and very rich deep lower notes.

Do you volunteer in dentistry? Are you involved in the dental society or other forms of organized dentistry or dental missions?

Yes, I have been volunteering in organizations with a dental cause such as, Fresh Start Surgical Gifts (Provide free dental services to kids who have facial deformities), Colgate. Bright Smiles Bright Futures, Healing California and One Hope Clinic - East Central Ministries (in New Mexico). I am also a member of the Hispanic Dental Association (HDA), the Hispanic International Mission (HIM), and the California Dental Association (CDA).

Do people ever tell you that you look like someone famous?

No, until now no one has told me that. Maybe I am just as unique as a maxillary first premolar with three root canals. (LOL!! Reader insert laughing emoji with tears here.)

Do you have a favorite or life quote?

Yes, I do. My two favorite life quotes

are: "Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile". I love this quote by Albert Einstein because I truly believe the essence of life is to help others. And second, "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them" by Walt Disney. This quote is a daily reminder that we cannot let fear stop us from fighting and working hard for our dreams. In my case, it's to become a licensed dentist in the U.S.

If a fellow dentist wants to reach out to you, can they email you?

Of course, especially if there are any other Foreign-trained dentists with some doubts or questions about the process of getting the dental license in the U.S. I surely can help them out! I can be contacted via email to laudes810@gmail.com. I will be happy to help in any possible way.

We are indeed better together!

The more we learn about one another and the more we come together around our commonalities and our diversities, the more we grow and thrive as a community.

That's how we build not only our collegial network, but it is one way we can build friendships. We hope you are enjoying this column and if you would like to be featured in a future publication, please reach out to maliekajohnson@gmail.com ♦

Starting from scratch or acquiring a practice

By Nick Huston, VP, Regional Business Development Officer, Bank of America Practice Solutions¹

There's a lot to think about when considering a startup practice versus an acquisition. Your preference will depend on several factors including your goals, resources, risk tolerance, and market conditions. Starting a practice from scratch allows you to pick your desired location, hand-select your team, get the latest and most innovative dental equipment, and create your own culture within the practice. On the other hand, an acquisition can provide instant cash flow, quicker access to established resources, and potentially accelerated growth. It ultimately depends on what aligns best with your personal and professional goals.

I encourage all doctors to explore both options simultaneously—and the first step for both is to understand your borrowing power. Financial requirements for a startup or acquisition can vary, so it's important to understand what you qualify for. A conversation with your local Bank of America Practice Solutions Business Development Officer is a great place to start. We can discuss the financing offerings for first-time practice owners, connect you with industry experts, and be there for you from the moment you see your first patient as an owner and throughout the rest of your career.¹

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Nick Huston

Nick Huston is a Vice President and Regional Business Development Officer at Bank of America Practice Solutions. In his role, he provides lending and financing options to dental professionals in Southern California, San Diego and Hawaii markets with their practice financing needs.

Nick has over 13 years of experience working with business owners and medical professionals. He takes pride in guiding his clients through their financial journey, leveraging his extensive experience and knowledge of the healthcare sector, to fulfill their business dreams.

A resident of San Diego, Nick is passionate about collaborating closely with his network, and a personalized approach to the relationships he builds, to create customer financing solutions for their current and future business priorities.

Nick graduated from the W.P. Carey School of Business, which has provided him with a strong foundation in finance and business strategy. He is also a member of the San Diego Dental Foundation, demonstrating his commitment to the local dental community. In his spare time, he cherishes spending time with his family, and enjoys outdoor activities and water sports, taking full advantage of the beautiful Southern California landscape.

For more information or to get started today, please contact me:



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yes on PROP 35

Every election day in California, the ballot is stacked with multiple confusing ballot propositions. I am writing this to inform you why you should vote yes on Prop 35. The ballot measure would lock in new funding to increase Medi-Cal dental reimbursement rates, dental student loan repayments, healthcare workforce development and other programs. A broad coalition of health care organizations, including the California Dental Association, filed the ballot measure a year ago to protect and expand access to a variety of health care services. The coalition collected over 800,000 signatures to qualify what is now known as Proposition 35.

The current Medi-Cal program provides medical and dental coverage to 15 million adults and 50% of the children in the state of California.

The Medi-Cal program has been underfunded for decades. Prop 35 will finally provide some long-term, permanent solutions to provide access to care to millions of our most vulnerable Californians. Prop 35 is built around an existing managed care organization (MCO) levy on health insurance companies. This levy has been in existence since the Schwarzenegger administration and also brings in matching federal funding to support state programs like Medi-Cal without raising taxes on individuals.

The current MCO levy goes into the state's general fund, and can be used by Governor Newsom and the California legislature for non-healthcare related programs. The measure would make the MCO tax permanent, and would dedicate the money to Medi-Cal and specific healthcare programs, including increasing Medi-Cal dental reimbursement rates. Importantly, the measure will also prevent the state

from redirecting these revenues for non-healthcare purposes. Over the past 15 years, the healthcare crisis has been made worse because the state has redirected more than \$30 billion away from healthcare funding.

The designated funds for Medi-Cal dental services will amount to at least a 10% increase in its total budget. This is similar to the funding initially allocated in 2016 under the Proposition 56 tobacco tax, with the added bonus of not being a declining revenue source. The intent is to focus dental rate increases on restorative and specialty services complementing the rate increases made through Proposition 56. In addition, Prop 35 mandates independent audits, and requires that 99% of the funds be spent on patient care, not bureaucracy.

This is an important opportunity to strengthen the Medi-Cal program for the long-term and ensure that healthcare dollars stay in healthcare. With so many Californians dependent on the Medi-Cal program, we need it to be a functional, sustainable program with stable funding. Our early career dentists, who are much more likely to be providers in the Medi-Cal program, need to know that the program will be ongoing, stable, and viable for them to participate in it.

The measure's other relevant provisions include new student loan repayment funds for dentist and physicians, and funds to expand education and training to increase the number of healthcare workers. Who supports Prop 35? It is supported by a large, broad bi-partisan coalition that includes physicians, dentists, healthcare workers, first responders, hospitals, community health centers and both the Californian Republican and Democratic Parties, because it will improve access to health care for all California patients. Come November Vote Yes on Prop 35. ♦



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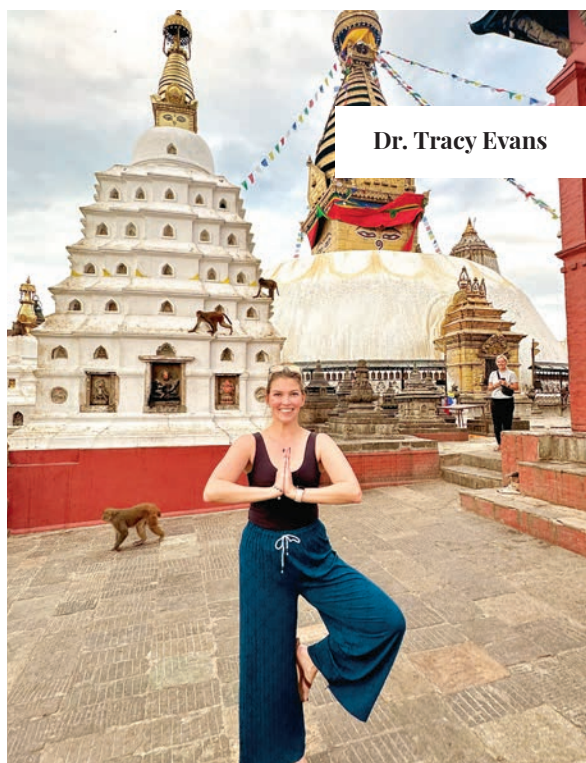
Written By:
Katherine Hobday



Dr. Katherine
Thomson

DR. KATHERINE THOMSON

Dr. Katherine Thomson's passion for hiking and backpacking began during her college years at UCSD, where she embarked on her first trip with Outback Adventures. Since then, she has explored iconic destinations such as Havasupai, Half Dome, and Mount Whitney. For Dr. Thomson, the best part of hiking is accessing places that are otherwise unreachable by car. Her advice? Connect with friends who share the same enthusiasm, invest in a quality pair of hiking shoes, and dive into nature. REI is a great resource for beginners, offering classes and gear to help get you started.



Dr. Tracy Evans

DR. TRACY EVANS

Dr. Tracy Evans has a deep passion for traveling, whether exploring stateside or internationally. Her love for travel began as a child when her mom would take her and her brother to National Parks for vacations, and it grew further during her time in the Navy, making international travel a comfortable experience. Dr. Evans cherishes those unforgettable moments, like the audible gasp when seeing the Pyramids, feeling the power of Niagara Falls, or watching the sunrise from the summit of Mt. Fuji. These experiences offer a unique mix of adrenaline and inner peace. Her advice? Block out your calendar in advance and give yourself permission to enjoy what you love, without guilt. For an added adventure, she suggests choosing long layovers in places you've never been and exploring them, some of her most memorable experiences have come from layovers longer than 24 hours.



DR. MARY AFZALI

Dr. Mary Afzali is a Global Real Estate Advisor at Pacific Sotheby's International Realty, with over 30 years of experience in the field. She loves the financial freedom that real estate can present when done correctly. Dr. Afzali excels in networking, working with many different trades, negotiating, and being creative in problem-solving. She is dedicated to serving her clients before, during, and after a transaction. While she acknowledges that dentistry is an amazing field, Dr. Afzali sees real estate as a valuable exit option. She enjoys serving her real estate clients with the same dedication she once applied to her patients, helping them achieve their goals and dreams.



DR. LYDIA HUMES

Dr. Lydia Humes is passionate about marketing, which she considers both a hobby and a business. It allows her to step out of the office and engage in creative pursuits. Her marketing business is purpose-driven, focusing on helping shelter dogs. Through this work, she ended up adopting a dog herself, adding a personal and rewarding dimension to her business endeavors.

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**Dr. Maricelle
Ortiz-Luis**

DR. MARCIELLE ORTIZ-LUIS

Dr. Maricelle Ortiz-Luis does Polynesian dancing, mostly Tahitian, but also Samoan and Hula. After being inspired by the culture and dances in Luaus during her visits to different islands in Hawaii, she decided to challenge herself by starting Polynesian Dancing in September of 2023. She quickly loved learning the dances and was performing in shows within just 2 months of joining the class. Since then, she has enjoyed the incredible energy and vibe from both performers and audiences at multiple shows. She encourages others to look online for local classes, try a trial class, and see if it's something they'd like to pursue. Polynesian Dancing offers a rigorous full-body workout that promotes core strength, endurance, flexibility, coordination, and good posture. These benefits are especially useful for dental professionals, given their daily work.

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