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Practice What You Preach

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by Michael Sesemann, D.D.S.,
Past Accreditation Chair

Dr. Michael Sesemann received his dental degree in 1981 from the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry. An Accredited member of the AACD since 1999, Dr. Sesemann recently completed a two-year term as AACD Accreditation Chair. He currently serves the Academy as a member of its Board of Directors and numerous committees and as an Examiner for the Accreditation and Fellowship processes.

While maintaining a full-time practice in Omaha, Dr. Sesemann lectures internationally and has published several articles on the techniques necessary for successful completion of the comprehensive restorative case. He serves as a faculty member at the Dawson Center for Advanced Dental Study in St. Petersburg, Florida; and at the Institute of Oral Art and Design in Sarasota. He also is on the editorial boards of *Practical Procedures* and *Aesthetic Dentistry* and *The Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry*.

You've Earned the Credential... Now What?

It was 1996 and I was preparing to leave my first AACD Annual Scientific Session. After 15 years in practice, I had been professionally rejuvenated by my experiences during those few days in San Diego. I wanted what AACD members had—the energy, the excitement, and the *knowledge*. There was one last thing to do before leaving the hotel; I went to the Accreditation booth and signed up.

It didn't really occur to me until reading the materials on the plane ride home what I had just done. What could have possessed me? I had completed only one indirect all-porcelain restoration in my first 15 years of practice. How could I possibly measure up to the Accreditation standards?

It was a difficult two-and-a-half years—my staff and I had so much to learn! I attended every Accreditation Workshop, attended every course I could at the Annual Scientific Sessions and/or watched the videos afterwards with my staff, and listened intently to what Accredited members had to say when I sought their feedback. The mentoring I received from Accredited AACD members helped us in immeasurable ways and was one of the keys to our success. The information was not biased, it could always be cross-referenced, and it was never contingent upon signing up for the next level of a continuing education continuum. In 1999, my staff and I were successful in attaining an Accreditation plaque. But

even more satisfying, we had been given the true gift of Accreditation: the *knowledge* that we gained during the process. I am forever indebted to those who took the time to pass that gift on to my staff and me.

As Accreditation Chair for the past two years, I heard many reasons for pursuing the credential. I have also had the privilege of witnessing the dramatic changes that occur in the lives of Accreditation candidates as they journey through the process. I am fortunate to be in a position where I am able to mentor and pay back part of my debt by helping others learn our craft and attain the *knowledge*. It has been extremely gratifying.

This is an interesting point in time for the Academy. As interest in esthetic dentistry spirals upward, so do the numbers of our general membership. An opportunity is presenting itself—it is not about growth for the sake of growing; rather, it is to share what we know with any colleague who wishes to participate in the Accreditation process. Every Accredited member is responsible for sharing the knowledge and helping our credentialed membership grow to an ever-higher percentage of our membership.

With vast numbers of dentists and lab technicians signing up for the first part of the Accreditation process (the written examination) in Vancouver, we will have just under 500 members eligible to begin sending in clinical cases for Accreditation.

ACCREDITATION ESSENTIALS

The Academy can benefit from each and every one of the candidates being successful. And when the Academy benefits, Accredited members benefit, as growth makes the credential more recognized, more valuable. I urge every Accredited member to help an Accreditation candidate when approached to do so. And if you are not approached, make sure to extend the invitation. Encourage general members to seek the credential. If our credential is to achieve

the recognition and value we know it deserves, every Accredited member must be, first and foremost, a mentor and a teacher.

Although it was tremendously exciting to receive our Accreditation plaque, it was only one moment in time. The excitement of helping someone else to get his or her plaque can happen over and over. Share the gift—pass on the *knowledge!* *AKP*



Newly Accredited Members



DEBORAH COOPER-LALL, D.D.S.

Dr. Deborah Cooper-Lall graduated from the University of Alberta Dental School in 1992 and has practiced in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, for 12 years. She has lectured for Global Dental Seminars Inc. on photography in the dental practice. She and her husband, Mark, enjoy traveling, exercise, dining, cooking, and reading. AKP



NANCY NORLING, D.D.S.

Dr. Nancy Norling graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry in 1989 and has practiced for 15 years in Minneapolis. A board member of the Minnesota Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, Dr. Norling has won five AACD Smile Gallery Competition awards, and has been recognized by her peers as a "top cosmetic dentist" in Mpls. St. Paul magazine. She and her husband, Al, enjoy golf, cooking, and wine-collecting. AKP



CATHY SANTONE, D.D.S.

Dr. Cathy Santone graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Dentistry in 1995 and is in private practice in Encinitas, California. She attended her first AACD Annual Scientific Session in Puerto Rico in 1997 and was inspired by the beautiful esthetic dentistry and the enthusiasm shared by the doctors in attendance. Dr. Santone, who is president of the Southwest Affiliate of the AACD, enjoys sailing with her husband, Scott Owen; running, diving, and spending time with her family. AKP