

**As a special project for the American College of Prosthodontists, the Editor and Publisher of *ProsStars* was recently given the task of documenting a brief history of the College from its beginning. All members and potential members of the College and any and all interested parties should share this history. It is published as follows:**

## THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PROSTHODONTISTS

The organized structure of the American College of Prosthodontists was approved on February 11, 1971 at a meeting of potential members held at the Sheraton Blackstone Hotel, Chicago, Illinois.

### Reasons for formation of the ACP

*There is a genuine need for an organization comprised of the certified specialists in prosthodontics. That is the reason the College was formed. [President Ken Marcroft, Newsletter, Vol.2, No.2, Oct. 1974]*

*Most graduates of prosthodontic training programs were not being accepted into membership or elective office in the existing prosthodontic societies (referring to the 50s and 60s). [Secretary and later President Dean Johnson's letter to Gerald M. Gavin, 28 April 1982]*

### Conception and formation

As near as can be determined, Dr. Ray Loiselle, a prosthodontist with the Veteran's Administration conceived of the College. He felt there was no prosthodontic organization that clearly represented the fully trained specialist in prosthodontics, the existing organizations being a mix of those fully trained in prosthodontics and those merely interested (the discipline). Dr. Loiselle formed a balanced Exploratory Committee made up of two individuals each from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Veteran's Administration, academic institutions and two with an undetermined affiliation. This committee wrote the Constitution and Bylaws, chose the organization's name and designed the seal of the College prior to the initial February 1971 business meeting. These 12 individuals later became identified as ACP Founders. Dr. Loiselle was elected the College's first president.

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### Establishing the ACP, once formed

The College's corporate values became telling signs of its future success.

Value: clearly stated and well understood membership criteria. The hallmark of College strength was and is membership achieved solely by educational credentials

Value: great amounts of volunteerism. The elected Executive Council, the appointed Committee Chairmen, and especially the elected Secretary and Treasurer conducted all of the College business during its first 7 years. There was no employed staff or contracted outside assistance.

Value: protection of the College's financial resources. Minimal reimbursement, if any, to volunteers conducting College business; printing of College publications, certificates and forms at low bid; jewelry and plaques sold at near cost; travel of officers at own expense and travel expense of guest speakers closely controlled; no-expense sing-along parties at Mid Winter meetings in Chicago; and a watchful eye on Annual Session expense; all while keeping dues at a minimum —all examples of prudent financial management.

Value: Living within budget. 7 years after its beginning an ACP Central Office was established. It was decided to place it in a location where its oversight could be easily managed by members, and to hire one employee, a Central Office Director. A Central Office was opened in San Antonio, Texas in 1978. This operation continued until 1987 when a search was instituted for an Executive Director. The first Executive Director was hired in 1990 and the Central Office began relocation to the ADA building in Chicago in 1994 with a considerably enlarged staff.

Value: Working with clearly stated ethical guidelines. Determinations in ethical conduct were first referred to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. The need to more formally develop ethical guidelines was recognized in 1984, and in 1986 a Committee on Ethics was formed. A "Guideline for Advertising", an article "The Essence of Ethics", rules concerning the use of the College logo, guidelines for using F.A.C.P. initials, and finally a Code of Professional Ethics were all published by the College. Former President and Newsletter Editor Robert Elliott finalized all of these efforts as the long standing Chairman of the Ethics Committee.

Value: Maintaining the opportunity for all members to be participants in the governance of the College. Associate Members were given the right to vote on College business and in elections in 1975. The standard business meeting format in effect since formation of the College was replaced by business being conducted by a representative House of Delegates meeting for the first time in October 1993.

Value: Setting clear goals through strategic planning. *I suggest that an Aims and Goals Committee be formed. [First President, Keith Marcroft, Newsletter Vol. 2, No. 1, April 1974]* The first Aims and Goals workshop was held in July 1975 and 7 goals with 44 subsets were published. In 1987 President Cosmo DeSteno appointed an ad hoc committee to study the future of the ACP. This committee concentrated on ACP / FPO issues critical at that time. *The College faces many short and long term challenges, so it is appropriate that we have a Goals and Objectives meeting. [President William Kuebker, Newsletter, Vol.18, No.1, Feb. 1988]* This meeting was held in San Antonio, Texas in June 1988. A third Aims and Goals workshop was held in Dallas, Texas during the summer of 1993, the result being a "short list" of 6 broad goals and 5 or 6 objectives under each. *This work truly addressed our direction for the next five years. The best way to create the future is to plan it. [President Ronald Woody, Newsletter Vol. 23, Issue 3, July 1993]*

Value: No hidden agendas. Clearly stated policies from the beginning were: meetings open to all without exception, including Executive Council meetings; availability of printed minutes of all meetings to any and all members and to any other organization upon request.

Value: Stressing scientific endeavors. The annual session and many College publications emphasized the scientific. In September 1992 the College began publication of its own journal, *The Journal of Prosthodontics* with Dr. Ken Stewart named as Editor. The W. B. Saunders Company was selected as publisher.

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## THE ACP AND THE FEDERATION OF PROSTHODONTIC ORGANIZATIONS (FPO)

The FPO was in existence at the time of the ACP's founding. The FPO was a consortium of 18 prosthodontic organizations. Its executive offices were located in Chicago in close proximity to the American Dental Association. At its inception the College became a member organization of the FPO.

ACP and FPO Interactions

Interactions with the FPO immediately became adversarial for four important reasons:

1. In 1947 the Academy of Denture Prosthetics established the American Board of Prosthodontics, a process that defined the specialty. In 1972, following the formation of the ACP, the Academy relinquished sponsorship of the Board to the FPO. This was deemed an effort to keep sponsorship of the board away from the newly organized ACP. In fact the action gave sponsorship to an organization of organizations containing some members who were neither trained nor board certified specialists.

2. The dues structure of the FPO and the increasing large membership of the ACP in comparison to other prosthodontic organizations in the FPO meant that the ACP would carry a disproportionate share (30 to 40%) of the FPO budget. There was a continuing dispute on whether member organizations or individual members of the organizations would pay dues to the FPO. As it stood, individual members of member organizations paid FPO dues and many elected not to pay; this included 45% of ACP members. This created conflict because delegate strength to the FPO House of Delegates was predicated on dues paying members and not actual member numbers. *The Federation cannot change from an organization composed of organizations to one of individual members. [Founder and former Treasurer and President Stephen Bartlett, Newsletter, Vol.1, No. 5, December 1973]*

3. Because of the makeup of member organizations in the FPO, it became entirely possible that the FPO's officers might be those not trained or boarded in the specialty. This in fact did occur in the office of FPO president at least twice following formation of the College.

4. Specialists in prosthodontics were represented at the Dental Specialties Group by selected officers of the FPO. The Specialties Group was organized to provide a mechanism for dental specialties to give input to the American Dental Association. The College being represented by the FPO created the possibility that issues in the specialty of prosthodontics would be carried to the ADA by individuals not trained or boarded. This in fact did occur at least twice after the formation of the College.

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Changes in ACP / FPO relationships:

Resolution to exit the FPO

At the 1986 Annual Session the South Carolina Section offered a resolution that asked for ACP withdrawal from the FPO. The resolution called for a mail vote by each ACP member. The resolution was tabled definitely for one year, and during that time most College business focused on the issue. The pros and cons were amply discussed within the membership and in a lengthy special edition of the *ACP Newsletter*.

Mail vote

A mail vote was conducted in the spring of 1988. 1542 ballots were distributed and 1047 returned. A vote for the ACP to remain in the FPO passed 677 to 368. The outcome of this vote signified that the College's goals would remain unchanged, but the goals would be pursued and achieved while working within the framework of the FPO. *We must now demonstrate to both those within organized dentistry and interested parties outside dentistry that we can provide responsible leadership and effective representation for the specialty of prosthodontics. [President William Kuebker, Newsletter Vol. 18, No. 2, June 1988]*

Change in sponsorship the Board (ABP)

At its September, 1992 meeting the FPO House of Delegates voted to change the sponsorship of the American Board of Prosthodontics from the FPO to the ACP. The American Dental Association's Council on Dental Education formally recognized the

change at its December, 1992 meeting. Thus the American College of Prosthodontists became the parent of the specialty and the sponsor of the Board. *I am now very proud that the modest organization I helped found is now a major national specialty organization. I'm still very enthusiastic about the specialty and the College. I know even greater things lie ahead. Dr. Raymond Loiselle, Founder and First President [Newsletter, Vol. 23, Issue 1, Jan. 1993]*

An ACP Forum  
replaces the FPO

In late 1993 member organizations of the FPO considered not continuing the existing FPO organizational structure. The FPO in fact dissolved on December 31, 1994. The College recognized its strong responsibility for the discipline as well as the specialty, and it recommended a new consortium of prosthodontic organizations working within the framework of the College. This substitute group, named the Forum, was intended to provide a voice for organizations previously in the FPO. The Forum indeed became a reality in 1995, and at present it is made up of 13 prosthodontic organizations.

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### ACP ACHIEVEMENT, RESULTS, REPUTATION

From its beginnings until the present the College became a change agent for advancing the specialty of prosthodontics. Chronologically, the ACP has:

- Published a Study guide for Board Certification
- Actively participated in the Inter-Society Color Council
- Insured continuing education credit for members
- Published Classic Prosthodontic Articles
- Developed and published a Self Assessment Examination
- Established an annual Research Paper Competition
- Made available ACP jewelry items, official brass wall plaques, blazer patches and academic robes for sale
- Established a journal exchange between members
- Initiated a College Speakers Bureau
- Printed a Mini-Glossary of Color Terms
- Instituted a Private Practice Seminar in each Annual Session
- Cosponsored a removable partial denture workshop at the annual ADA session
- Formed College Sections
- Instituted an Affiliate Member Breakfast at the Annual Session / later changed to an annual Affiliate/Associate Seminar
- Initiated a dialogue with members of State Aging Conferences and developed position papers impacting on a White House Conference on Aging
- Supported formation of the International College of Prosthodontists
- Achieved voting representation on the American National Standards Institute
- Achieved recognition as a specialty by the California Dental Service Corporation with an accepted specialty fee proposal
- Sponsored insurance programs specific to the specialist with a private insurer
- Worked with the National Yellowpages Network to develop a trademarked "Prosthodontists Specialty Guide" in all Yellowpages
- Published a comprehensive 200 page ACP Peer Review Manual; instituted the Peer Review Workshop to familiarize members with its use; produced a videotape of instructions for its use
- Conducted and published the results of the Economic Survey of Private Practice Prosthodontists
- Formed the American College of Prosthodontists Education Foundation
- Instituted a table clinics session at the annual meeting
- Made the Educators - Mentors Seminar a permanent section of each annual meeting
- Worked with commercial firms to include a Commercial Exhibits area as a part of each annual meeting
- Instituted a Spouses Forum at the annual meeting
- Worked closely with the FPO Ad Hoc Committee for the Review of the Specialty
- Developed and conducted a Board Preparation Course
- Developed an educational exhibit explaining the ACP to be used at national conferences and meeting of other organizations
- Began publication of the Journal of Prosthodontics
- Accepted commercial sponsorship of selected annual session events

Instituted a House of Delegates to conduct College business  
 Sanctioned an ACP Laboratory Prescription Form  
 Created a National Implant Registry in cooperation with the Academy of Osseointegration  
 Assumed the responsibility for reviewing and revising the Standards for Advanced Specialty Education Programs in Prosthodontics  
 Hosted semiannual meeting of the Dental Specialties Group  
 Supported the Postdoctoral Dental Matching Program  
 Co-sponsored with the American Academy of Periodontists the first Joint Conference on Implants  
 Developed a scholarship award program through the Education Foundation for advanced specialty education  
 Sponsored the first annual Prosthodontic Research Symposium  
 With the Procter and Gamble Company underwriting, began publication of the "Perspectives in Prosthodontics" newsletter sent to 30,000 general dentists and all College members  
 Began an Authors Workshop at the annual session co-sponsored by The Journal of Prosthodontics and the W. B. Saunders Co.  
 Offered regional seminars entitled "Marketing Implant Prosthodontics"  
 Instituted Pre-Conference Education Sessions (courses) in conjunction with the annual session  
 Listed bibliographic references to prosthodontic literature on CD ROM  
 Created a Section Letterhead with new ACP logo  
 Offered a personal finance course at the annual session  
 With a grant from the ESPE company created and announced an updated web page  
 With Procter and Gamble launched a series of brochures explaining services provided by a prosthodontist  
 Developed for sale a 75 page Marketing Manual for use in conjunction with 3 targeted marketing seminars  
 Developed and published the Classification System of Complete Edentulism  
 Revised Accreditation Standards for Advanced Specialty Programs in Prosthodontics  
 Recognized and accepted international (foreign) Sections

### THE COLLEGE: 30 YEARS OF HISTORY PUTTING IT ALL INTO PERSPECTIVE

Evolution  
 Patience  
 Diplomacy  
 Respect

The formation of the American College of Prosthodontist was an idea whose time had come; specialists in prosthodontics have gained their rightful place along side the other seven specialties in dentistry. In the main the long struggle for reputation and recognition is remembered as the Federation (FPO)— College (ACP) conflict; but in fact the struggle was with the general practitioner in dentistry (some of whom had great experience in prosthodontics) who saw a group organizing to take part of the general practitioner's earned piece of dentistry. These general practitioners were joined by some specialists (either by training or by "grandfathering") who had become brothers organizationally with the discipline. Fairly, these mixed organizations had worked long and hard at gaining their own reputations and recognitions. The American Board of Prosthodontics and the leading journal of the day, *the Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry*, formed from these mixed organizations. The American Dental Association and the Academy of General Dentistry themselves are dentistry's strongest organizations and they too closely guarded the general practitioner whom they represent. The ADA's formal recognition of a specialty and the determination of its sponsoring organization are rewards difficult to achieve and seldom granted. With patience, diplomacy, respect for the general dentist and the general dentist experienced in prosthodontics, and with outstanding leadership the American College of Prosthodontists earned its place.

Recognizing  
 two important  
 changes

Two other important aspects of the College's history need to be recognized. When formed, fully trained prosthodontists were in the main military, government affiliated or those in academia coming from the military and government. The College's founders and leaders came from these groups. As the College grows, military careers become less dominant and academic careers become less lucrative in comparison to rapidly evolving private practice opportunities. The College is now wisely emphasizing and strengthening the private practice of the specialty. Second, many fully trained prosthodontists have dual or multiple memberships in several or many prosthodontic organizations. Such memberships are enjoyed for their social or geographic allegiances but have not helped clarify or define the specialty. As the ACP has grown and become stronger politically and more reputable scientifically these dual memberships are dissipating, and allegiances are growing stronger with the ACP. The College has earned this desirability of affiliation.

In Summary

The American College of Prosthodontists is a dental specialty organization that was formally established to:

- enhance patient care
- advance the art and science of prosthodontics
- promote the specialty of prosthodontics to the public, other dentists and health care professionals
- ensure the quality of prosthodontic education
- provide necessary professional services to its membership

As 30 years of College history is reviewed, it can be said that these goals have been and are being met. The conflicts and compromises and finally the agreements with those outside the College have well been worth it. We have a stronger specialty serving the public as it should! But too we should remember that history shows that the greatest danger arises when one's enemies from without are gone and the conflicts from within begin. History speaks; we are cautioned to listen. □

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