

Dear friends and colleagues

Welcome to volume 4, issue 2 of the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene*. I am going to diverge from my usual format and dedicate this issue to a very dear personal friend and 'mother' of the International Federation of Dental Hygiene, Wilma Motley, who sadly passed away late last year.

Through her untiring efforts and vision of a global organization linking dental hygienists worldwide, Wilma guided the transformation of the International Liaison Committee (ILC) into the International Federation of Dental Hygiene (IFDH) as we know it today. Naturally Wilma was elected as Founding President in 1986.

Under her leadership IFDH consolidated organizational goals that addressed issues pertaining to dental hygiene on an international level. Procedures were put in place to facilitate open lines of communication to assist the federation committees to achieve these goals.

A definition of a dental hygienist was adopted:

A dental hygienist is a health professional and is recruited from a recognized school of dental hygiene, who through clinical services and evaluation, consultative planning and evaluation endeavours, seeks to prevent oral diseases and assists people in maintaining an optimum level of oral health. Dental hygienists are health professionals whose primary concern is the promotion of total health through the prevention of oral disease.

A purpose was also adopted: The purpose of the IFDH is to promote access to quality preventive oral health service as part of total health to all people and to promote and advance the profession of dental hygiene on a non-government worldwide basis.

An International Survey on Dental Hygiene was accepted by the Board and periodic surveys were to be made. Liaison with the WHO was maintained. Future planning workshop developments which plan to insure that goals will be achieved are:

1. To strengthen the IFDH internet communications, finances and organisation; and
2. To develop and improve the professional image of the dental hygienist.

When interviewed in 1996 for the 10th Anniversary edition of *Contact International*, Wilma offered an insight into her vision for global dental hygiene and IFDH. When asked to identify the most important achievement of the federation during her term Wilma stated: "The strength of an established international organisation will promote the profession's growth

potential through this unity and the increased understanding of other duties. It is possible the federation will be in the position of being recognized as the international dental hygiene information clearing house'.

To quote Wilma when asked what are the most important challenges for dental hygienists: 'Oral health education and prevention and working with WHO and FDI, dental hygienists should be fully accepted and become a necessary part of those organisations' activities. Dental hygienists should be planning for third world populations'.

Finally she was asked about the future direction for IFDH and dental hygiene: 'Commitment to care and mutual concerns about the profession are shared by every dental hygienist throughout the world and these issues are being recognized and addressed on the international level. Dental hygienists must have the demonstrable knowledge and skills to enable them to promote and deliver oral health services to all people. I believe the IFDH should continue to consolidate its position with the WHO and the FDI'.

Wilma's vision has become a reality and today IFDH is recognized as the consultative authority on global dental hygiene issues and education. She would be quietly proud of her colleagues who continued her dream and humble in the recognition of her invaluable contribution to the global recognition of the profession to which she was so dedicated.

Even after her presidential term ended in 1989, Wilma remained active in IFDH activities. In her role as Archivist she authored the History of the IFDH and, every 3 years, attended the International Symposium on Dental Hygiene (the last being in Florence, Italy in 1998). Unfortunately this was to be the last time I would speak with her personally and at this time she expressed how proud she was of her colleagues and the achievements that had been made since those early days in 1986.

A great leader inspires greatness and to all who have come after her, we will be forever indebted to this quietly spoken, kind and generous woman who unselfishly shared her vision and empowered us to continue the dream.

Wilma E. Motley
IFDH President 1986–1989

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