

Don't Trust the Future of Our Specialty to Luck

"Do you feel lucky?! Well do ya?" These lines are from the famous Dirty Harry movie and point to a strategy that many employ in life for success . . . sheer luck. Even in the most dire circumstances and events, there are a small percentage of outcomes that allow for a favorable result, just as in this classic movie where the criminal is offered the chance to weigh the odds. Individuals can attain their position in life through hard work and achievement, birthright, and indeed luck. Regrettably, luck is not a strategy that advances civilizations or organizations. The Roman Empire did not just happen to be in the right place at the right time. Luck will not advance the growth and stature of our specialty.

Right now, we are observing the 65th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Europe during World War II. Such an undertaking takes an astounding amount of commitment from the protagonists. It takes resources. In the early 1940s, the average annual salary of employees in the United States was \$1290.00, and the minimum wage was \$0.43 per hour. What is not fully appreciated is the commitment of the civilian population to advance the war effort through rationing, recycling of strategic materials, and notably a *voluntary* financial dedication through the purchase of stamps and war bonds. Over the course of World War II, 85 million Americans purchased bonds totaling over \$185 billion! This was over 64% of the US financial outlay for the entire war effort. The total US cost of the war in 1944 dollars was \$288 billion. Although taxes allowed the government to continue functioning on a day-to-day basis, it was the additional voluntary financial commitment of the citizens that made it possible for the war to be financed and won.

Our annual dues allow the American College of Prosthodontists (ACP) to conduct the day-to-day operations of our organization; however, our participation is required to generate the resources needed to advance the growth of prosthodontics. The ACP Education Foundation (ACPEF) is the branch of our organization that advances our specialty through education reform and innovation, increasing our presence and public awareness, and funding educational summits and research projects. It needs

our help if our specialty organization, and prosthodontics, is going to take a leadership position in dentistry. It needs *your* help.

Since 2004, the ACPEF has sponsored tremendously successful summits associated with the American Dental Education Association meetings, a Prosthodontic Program Directors meeting in 2007 and 2008, as well as a Prosthodontic Educators Summit in April 2009. The ACPEF has supported a significant review of the predoctoral education accreditation standards as they relate to prosthodontics, making meaningful recommendations that will impact every graduating dentist. The foundation has supported the development of forward-looking strategies to take on the challenges of today and tomorrow. It has supported defending the specialty, as well as the development of the widespread influence and respect that prosthodontics has gained within the oral health community. The ACPEF has championed and continues to champion our cause. It has sponsored membership in the ACP for all graduate prosthodontics residents to engage them in the prosthodontic community early in their careers and has supported their attendance at our annual session through meeting registration and travel grants. It has supported ongoing research in prosthodontics. Projects to enhance private practice and expand public awareness of our specialty are continuing to be developed. The education foundation wants to do more.

We have an opportunity to create a culture in our organization of placing prosthodontists in leadership positions in dentistry.

We are a small specialty trying to cast a giant shadow on the dental landscape. This takes resources. We cannot count on luck. We all need to make a personal commitment to pull on this rope together, in the same direction. Please visit the ACPEF website today at www.prosthodontics.org/educationfoundation/ to find out how you can do YOUR part and donate online today.

Gregory Guichet, DDS
Chair, ACPEF Annual Appeal Committee

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