



ON TRANSITIONS



Douglas Chaytor



Rhonda Jacob



Steven Eckert

The thesaurus offers many synonyms for transitions and they all define change. Change is inevitable, and how we cope with it becomes a measure of what we are all about and defines for educators past personal legacies, as well as those that are still being consolidated. Those of you familiar with the works of Confucius will recall his writings about transitions: “At 30 I planted my feet firmly on the ground; and later, at 50 I knew what were the biddings from heaven; but later still I found that I could follow the dictates of my own heart.” More recently, Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s current literary protagonist observes that as we age we measure life’s transitions not in years but in decades. He observes that the fifties are decisive years because one becomes aware that almost everybody else is younger, while the sixties are the most intense because of the emerging suspicion that there is no longer time to make mistakes. There is great relevance in these observations, and the first half-year of my own transition into retirement has led to much introspection and emerging serenity as I contend with a major, albeit welcome, personal transition.

Three very special prosthodontists are also addressing their own unique transitions and deserve recognition in this, our first issue of 2006. All 3 colleagues—Douglas Chaytor, professor emeritus from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Rhonda Jacob from the MD Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas in Houston; and Steven Eckert at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota—have already impacted profoundly upon our discipline, with the latter 2 friends offering us the expectation of an even bigger contribution. I remind our readership that our collective scholarship journey demands more than a rigorous pursuit of scientific information. We must remember that there are numerous individuals who make the journey possible through their industry and example. Thus, we recognize this trio’s exemplary commitment to our discipline.

Doug Chaytor spent his entire academic career at Dalhousie and recently completed a near-decade of indispensable service to the International College of Prosthodontists as its secretary. I was privileged to speak at this retirement celebration last year and the following is a précis of my personal tribute.

University families are justifiably proud of their scholarly traditions of professional leadership, academic recognition, and humanitarian concerns: all integral parts of a dental faculty’s legacy. However, we should not forget that these accomplishments are not a given, they result only from a continuum of student guidance, staff accessibility, and commitment, provided by clinical scholars like Doug Chaytor. These individuals are the backbone of our clinical programs: our educational *raison d’être*. Doug Chaytor personifies qualities that our students do not always recognize immediately, but which they eventually grow to cherish, with the passage of time and the acquisition of wisdom, as the essence of good teaching. And then there is his record of loyalty, his tenacity, and his integrity. He came by these virtues quite naturally as reflected in the fact that (as only a wife can put it) he has been congenitally committed to run organizations by being “secretary of something-or-other” all of his life.

Doug is a proud Newfoundlander and a new Canadian. He has been nurtured by his heritage and a small but loving family, and shaped by a lifetime’s dedication to service. He was in Scouts both as a boy and later as an adult with his son Keith, and went on to win a Long Service Award and a Medal of Merit for Adult Leadership. At Bishop Field College in St John he received his school’s appointment as Rhodes Ideal Scholar, although he never went to Oxford. (Can anyone familiar with his unique regional accent imagine Doug with an Oxford accent!) And later, at Memorial University, he was president of the Pre-Med Society and assistant director of Memorial University Dramatic Society. He went on to serve as secretary

to the Dental Faculty as well as the University Senate during his long tenure at Dalhousie.

Some of you may say it's very easy for one islander to sing Doug's praises, implying that those of us from different islands must be insular, always sticking together against outsiders. But insularity has never been a problem for Doug, as reflected in what are commonly regarded as 2 of his many major dental accomplishments: co-founding the Association of Prosthodontists of Canada and running the International College of Prosthodontists as its secretary throughout the last several years of its steady but crucial development. Furthermore, there is nothing wrong with so many of us sticking together when the agenda seeks only a better world of teaching and learning, and a stronger international awareness of prosthodontics in our country. Doug never pursued populist or glamorous limelight-related jobs. Instead he sought teamwork, good governance, and a passion for fairness, qualities which underscored the role he brought to each organization he served.

A few years ago he decided (not without a certain degree of reluctance) that the future and survival of prosthodontics lay beyond the traditional parameters of the primacy of the anecdote, or the ruthless demands of accuracy in an all-too technically dominated clinical performance. He recognized that lingering traditional obsessions with micromilestones, plus the severe demands of a handicraft approach to problem solving, risked stifling intellectual development rather than enriching it. In other words, he came to terms with the new promise of implant prosthodontics, and the exciting, expanded biological and societal scholarly scope for his predilected discipline. Luckily for us in Toronto, he chose to join our recently acquired "mid-life-crisis-change-of-direction," and immediately endeared himself to our entire team. While we never actually minted a medal or instituted an award to honor his meritorious participation or leadership role, he knows that the recognition is his for the taking.

It was Abraham Lincoln who said that the measure of a man is not the size of his girth or his bank account but the size of his heart. And all of you who have enjoyed Doug's friendship will attest to the measure of this man.

Rhonda Jacob succeeds Doug Chaytor in the ICP's secretariat position, and joins Regina Mericske-Stern, the current co-president, as the second female officer since the inception of the organization. Rhonda's academic career to date has been nothing short of stellar and her energy and vision underscore the dynamic nature of her personality. She was raised on a third-generation farm in Iowa and attended the University of Iowa College of Dentistry, where she received her DDS and MS combined with a prosthodontic residency. She received a maxillofacial fellowship at MD Anderson and assumed a staff position within the Head and Neck Surgery Department, Section of Dental Oncology and Prosthodontics. Her daily responsibilities include full-time patient care within an academic hospital environment and serving as a mentor in the maxillofacial prosthetic fellowship. She is very active in several prosthodontic organizations and serves as the president of the Academy of Prosthodontics. She is also a member of the American Board of Prosthodontics.

Her primary clinical interest is oral rehabilitation of the head and neck cancer patient in a multi-specialty environment. Her most recent goal is the "ubiquitous use" of implants in the head and neck cancer patient—a tough task given the difficult access to this patient population. Every other specialty and treatment modality has such patients occupied, and although the rehabilitation is not an afterthought, it remains the final treatment rendered. If implant treatment is to be optimized for all these patients, it needs to be placed concurrently with the cancer therapy. This entails yet another specialist, adding to the patient's burden and challenging the "politics" of many treatment centers.

Steven Eckert is one of a small handful of North American prosthodontic scholars who excels in all of his many clinical pursuits. He was a 1977 graduate of the Ohio State University College of Dentistry. Following dental school he completed a General Practice Residency at Mount Sinai Medical Center of Chicago and taught fixed prosthodontics at Loyola University School of Dentistry while maintaining a private practice in Chicago. He was certified in prosthodontics and completed his Master of Science degree at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine. Dr Eckert is a diplomat of the American Board of Prosthodontics, and a fellow of the American College of Prosthodontists, the Academy of Prosthodontics, the Academy of Osseointegration, and the American Academy of Maxillofacial Prosthetics. He is a consultant in prosthodontics at the Mayo Clinic. He serves on the Board of Directors for the American Academy of Maxillofacial Prosthetics, the Academy of Osseointegration as vice president, and the Academy of Prosthodontics as recording secretary. He has served as associate editor of *The International Journal of Prosthodontics* and *The International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Implants*, an abstract editor for the *Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry*, and as a section co-editor for the *Journal of Prosthodontics*. He has published extensively in the scientific literature and presents at numerous scientific meetings. His research interests are in the fields of osseointegration and maxillofacial prosthetics.

In January 2006 he assumes the responsibility of editor-in-chief of *The International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Implants*, a reflection of the very high esteem he enjoys both in his chosen discipline and in related fields. His transition from our journal to *JOMI* expands our specialty's profile and reflects a career rich in achievement and commitment. We wish him much success in his ongoing activities.

A final transition involves the recent death of Dr h. c. Walter Haase, father of the Quintessence Publisher H. W. Haase. His was a long and distinguished career and this journal's editorial family sends deepest sympathies to the entire Haase family on behalf of the *IJP's* readership.

We would also like to take the opportunity on behalf of all of us on the IJP staff to wish our readers a very happy and healthy 2006.

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