

# VIRGINIA DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Constituent of the American Dental Association

Corporate Centre / 5002 Monument Avenue, Suite 101 / P.O. Box 6906 / Richmond, Virginia 23230 / 804/358-4927

EMANUEL W. MICHAELS, D.D.S.  
President

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Dear Dental Student:

As President of the Virginia Dental Association, as an alumnus of MCV School of Dentistry, and as a practicing dentist, I would like to share with you a message that I hope you will find important.

There is much at stake for all of us in the profession of dentistry, but most of all for you who have a practice life of 35 to 40 years ahead of you. You have longer to benefit from our successes, and longer to suffer from our failures. You should have a part in the process that determines your future. Do you really want to leave this future of yours up to someone else?

Groups with common interests have always organized for their mutual benefit and to improve whatever service the group provides. Carpenters who build houses have an organization, the contractors for whom they work have an organization. The American Student Dental Association and the American Dental Association (following graduation) are your organizations. This is one of the most relevant things in your professional life right now.

I will not belabor you with the insurance programs, the practice information and the educational opportunities that come to you as a result of membership. ADA research helped to bring you the air rotor and the composite resins, the ADA tests and confirms the quality of the dental materials that you use, the ADA fights for scholarship money from many sources for dental students. I won't keep your attention with the fact that the ADA is responsible for the school that is giving you your education, and by its accreditation sees to it that your education is a valid return for the time and tuition which you have invested.

I do want to tell you about the forces that today want to take control of the delivery of dental care. There are denturists who want to treat the edentulous, and there are hygienists who want to work independently. There are insurance companies and entrepreneurs who want to cut your dental fees, and tell you how to practice. Governmental agencies that take care of the laws and the rules and regulations that govern the practice of dentistry hear from these people all the time. If they don't hear from you, you have abdicated control of your destiny and given it to others. If you do not choose to try to control your own future, there are many others who will try



to fill the vacuum that you leave. In the battle for your future, this is your only voice. When dental students or practitioners opt out of the process, someone else has to carry a heavier load. If enough people standby and let someone else carry the burden, we may all wake up one day and find there is no one there. The barn door will be open, and the horse will be gone.

American dentistry is the best in the world. We have done our job well, it seems we have done our job too well, you know we have a busyness problem. Your economic future may depend on our bringing the 50% of the population who do not use dental services into the mainstream of dental care. This will be the focus of a new, and expensive and unprecedented ADA marketing program. Make no mistake, your future depends on this.

The aims of this Association are not purely selfish. Certainly they are directed toward our interest, but our interest is the dental health of America, and we have done a darn good job on the people we reached. It is in the interest of non-users of dental services that we reach them. They have even told us so in surveys of random population samples. Our self interest is intertwined with the dental health of America, and the delivery of the best services by the best trained dentists in the world. Your professional future is bound up in this future of American dentistry, and in its attempt to reach the most people with the best.

Alone you are helpless before the odds against you, together we can and will succeed in producing the best for the greatest number of our citizens at a fee that is fair, and under circumstances that are reasonable.

We have done everything possible to make student membership inexpensive and rewarding. We provide you with insurance and with access to some membership services. We allow you a reduced dues payment the first few years in practice.

One of my last requests as VDA President is to have student members placed on VDA Committees so that you can better understand what we are doing for your future. I ask that you join the ASDA, I ask that you join us for your future and for the future of dentistry. If you won't join, will you tell us why? Perhaps we have an answer for you. You can of course leave your battle for others to wage, but we can't do it nearly so well without you as with you. We both need an active and interested student organization, one that represents all of the student body.

I look forward to our bright future together, and I wish you well in your academic year. May you always be well.

Sincerely,

Emanuel W. Michaels, D.D.S.  
President