

Monday, February 10, 2014

A Senior Moment



Your “senior moment” as a dentist can come at anytime. I stood at the podium addressing my colleagues at the House of Delegates during the Arizona Dental Association meeting on September 21, 2013, in Sedona.

It hit me, and the words just fell out of my mouth. “This is not my profession, this is not my association.” At the age of 61, I am able to start wrapping my arms around the fact that the profession and the association belong to the younger dentists now. My role, as I am in my senior years, is to try to facilitate their transition in while Debbie and I transition into another purpose.

I think the thing that hit me first is that Errol (51) and Karl (65) were not there. This was the first meeting of the HOD where Errol Kahn and Karl Zimmerman, two very involved dentists, were only with us in spirit.

And then the real irony of this meeting hit. As the clock moved closer to 11:00, everyone in the room knew that long-time AzDA supporter and past presidential candidate for ADA, Charley Siroky (76), was about to be buried just two hours way in Phoenix. Charley had been a pillar of the association. He was involved in so many ways. And yet, God made it happen that many who would attend his funeral were not going to be present. His friends and colleagues from all over the state would not be there to say their final goodbyes.

I could not help but see the lesson crystallize as it was evident that, no matter how important a dentist was, the reason for their importance was our profession. No one person is bigger than the association or the profession. Understanding that there will be no more Dental Association meetings for Errol, Karl or Charley has changed my view of the world and, more specifically, my view of my place in organized dentistry.

Realizing that Charley was only 15 years older than me has helped me understand that I have much I want to do with the remaining years of my profession and life. I'd like to remind all of my younger colleagues who sit and worry about their future and the future of the profession that we all did at your age. You should be involved and thinking about how you will spend your career in dentistry.

My great hope is that you will think and worry and become passionate about your profession and life as a dentist. More importantly, I hope the time flies by as it has for Debbie and I, and that you will have that senior moment and realize it is never was about you. The best in dentistry is yet to come!

Enjoy being a dentist,

Bob Oro, DMD, MAGD

P.S. This is my final blog for AGD; it belongs to the next generation.