



Chronicle Monthly

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

AAWD
celebrates 100
years of women
in dentistry!



PERSISTENT. RESILIENT. EMPOWERED.

A workshop for women

**Saturday, Sept. 18th
& Saturday, Oct. 23rd** | 10am-2pm EST

[Click Here to Register Online](#)

Attend the Virtual Workshop for Women!

FAQ:

Q: What if I can't make one of the sessions?

A: All registrants will have access to the recording. CE will be for live attendees only.

Q: Do I have to be a member?

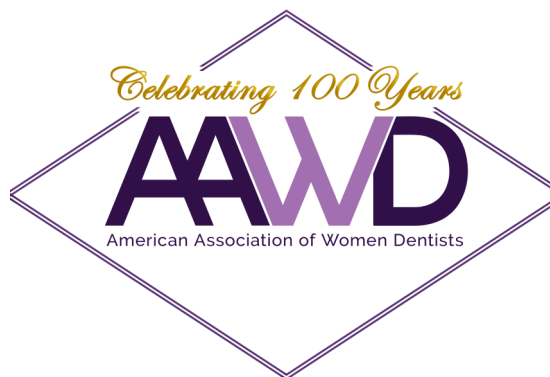
A: No! All are welcome to attend.

Q: Who are the speakers and topics?

A: Please see our website for details on speakers and topics that range from Orofacial Pain to Forensic Odontology to Family Planning!

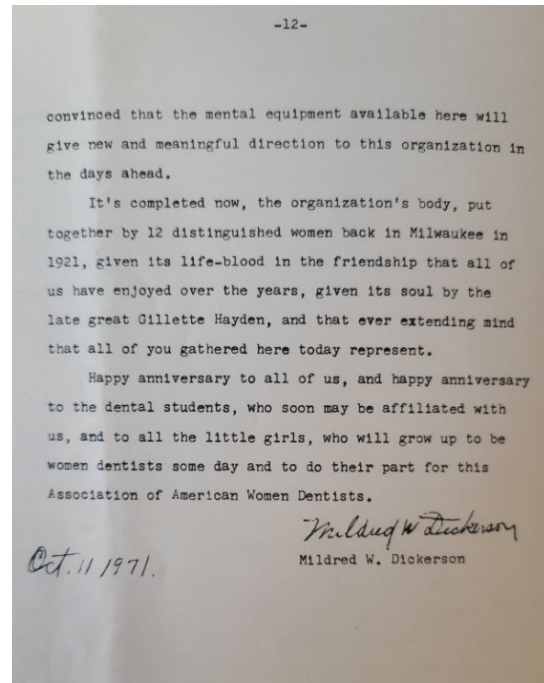
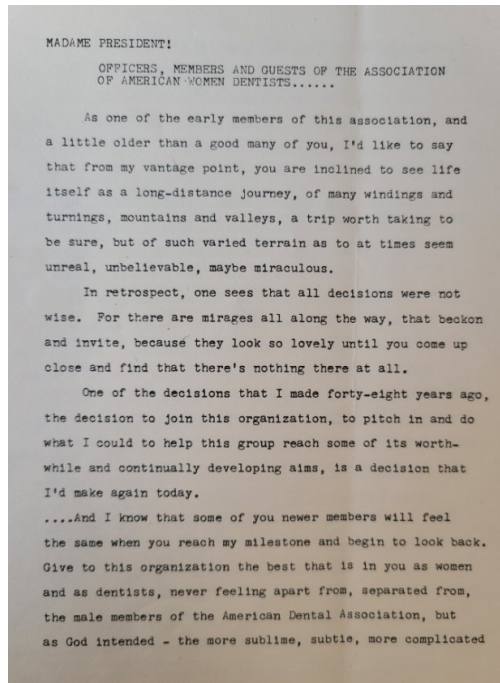
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In her address to the organization in October 1971, Dr. Mildred Dickerson, president of the Association in 1930, presents her thoughts for the 50th anniversary of the then Association of American Women Dentists. AAWD has a hard copy archived among many of Dr. Eleanor Bushee's AAWD meeting notes and photographs.

Please read the entire speech below, as transcribed by Dr. Aguilar.



“Madame President! Officers, members and guests of the Association of American Women Dentists...

As one of the early members of this association, and a little older than a good many of you, I’d like to say that from my vantage point, you are inclined to see life itself as a long-distance journey, of many windings and turnings, mountains and valleys, a trip worth taking to be sure, but of such varied terrain as to at times seem unreal, unbelievable, maybe miraculous.

In retrospect, one sees that all decisions were not wise. For there are mirages all along the way, that beckon and invite, because they look so lovely until you come up close and find that there’s nothing there at all.

One of the decisions that I made forty-eight years ago, the decision to join this organization, to pitch in and do what I could to help this group reach some of its worthwhile and continually developing aims, is a decision that I’d make again today.

...And I know that some of you newer members will feel the same when you reach my milestone and begin to look back. Give to this organization the best that is in you as women and as dentists, never feeling apart from, separated from, the male members of the American Dental Association, but as God intended—the more sublime, subtle, more complicated naturally, part of that great body.

So, we’re fifty years old this year: and that means that the richer, more rewarding years are beginning for us. We’re over our growing pains, we’re ready to make a good reach for maturity: and the best reach that we can make is to insure from now on that there will be an Association of American Women Dentists around fifty year from now when a group of girls, not too dissimilar from ourselves, will meet to hold their centennial celebrations.

For we’ve proved of late that there is a place for this organization, even in this ever-changing society, where the rock-ribbed women’s Ivy League Colleges are throwing their doors open to men students—even in this time of stepped-up evolutionary change when one can not very easily be certain if the long-haired patient with he carefully-styled tresses, the necklaces and hot pants is really male or female. For no matter how much equality, super-equality, and ultra-supersonic equality women achieve with men, we’re going to go on being women.

How did we come together? How did our association come into being?

Well, try to imagine what it was like, attending an annual meeting of The American Dental Association fifty years ago. There you were, alone, very probably the only woman dentist from your area, wandering about from seminar to exhibit alone. You took your meals alone, but if you were a little lucky in those days, and a bit daring for those non-permissive times, you might just figure out that the other woman dining alone at that table over there in the corner might just be another woman dentist, and she was, and automatically, you had a great deal in common.

So, now there were two of you to wander about alone amid that vast assembly of men.

Well, in 1921, twelve of those women decided to form an association, an organization by which they would come together at the annual meetings of the A.D.A. and stop feeling lonely and out of place. And no matter how many equal rights resolutions were to be passed in the years ahead, no matter how concerned some of us became over the denial of even minimum civil rights to women in other countries, no matter how economically pinched or affluent we were to become, the truth is that our first purpose and aim was merely social, just getting together the way women will, to chat, talk about our work back home, and go over problems peculiar to women dentists.

But social is a small word next to friendship. And friendship became the life-blood of this association from those early days when it was called—Horrors—a Sorority. Oh, women in those days, I mean wide awake, alert concerned women dentists, weren't too different from you young women today, and they objected to that word Sorority, so that we became The Federation of American Women Dentists.

Our brothers say that we are forever changing something, even if its' only the furniture in our parlor. So , we did change our name again in 1928, and from then on, we've been The Association of American Women Dentists.

From 1921, the association had a body and friendship was its life-blood.

And then, the late great Doctor Gillette Hayden would give the Association a soul. Let me tell you a little about this woman, who was such an inspiration to so many of us who were privileged to know her.

She inherited her activism, her humanitarianism naturally, from her mother, a feminist in those difficult days when women were first seeking a status higher than that of possession, goods and chattel. Her Great-Grandfather, Dr. Horace Hayden, along with Dr. S.S. Harris, was one of the two founders of the first chartered Dental College in the world, the Baltimore School of Dental Surgery, now the Dental College of the University of Maryland.

She was a professional woman of the highest order. She dignified dentistry and was proud of her profession, while with her superb physique, clever skill, innate refinement and love of humanity was successful in clinical practice to an unusual degree. After her untimely death in 1929, many of her patients remarked, "Dr. Hayden was the best friend I ever had", and in truth she was a friend to mankind. She numbered among her friends and many children and young people who looked upon her as one who understood and loved them. Possessing a keen intellect and open mind sensitive to the truth, her judgments were fair and tolerant.

As to her personal character, how inspiring it was! It was said of her that there was not a single desirable trait of character or disposition which she did not possess. Those who knew her will readily agree to this tribute.

She did not confine her interests to dentistry, but was a pioneer in many movements for the betterment of conditions for women. She was especially interested in young business and professional women and was a past president of the local and national Altrusa Clubs. She cooperated with every worthy civic movement and gave generously to meet the needs of a cause or of individuals. Her unique and instructive clinics at dental meetings were outstanding in their interest and value. Everything that she did was done the very best even to the minutest detail, regardless of the time, effort and energy involved. Being a woman of culture, she loved and appreciated music, art and literature.

Dr. Hayden and Dr. Grace Rogers Spalding were co-founders of The American Academy of Periodontology. It was their preliminary correspondence and work that brought 18 charter members together in 1914, seven of whom were women. They have been given the credit for this in the published history of the American Academy of Periodontology.

One of the first members of this organization, she gave unstintingly of her time, talents and energy that goals be developed, better defined, and their pursuit encouraged.

During the years when American women were seeking the right to vote, Dr. Hayden continued the feminist activities of her own pioneer suffragette mother. The amendment of the United States Constitution, providing universal women's Suffrage, was yet to be ratified by her own state of Ohio, and indeed its ratification hung in the balance, when Dr. Hayden turned her own professional office over to the representatives from the National Woman's Party in Washington, D.C., who had the task of lobbying members of the Ohio Legislature for ratification.

[...] That autumn—1920—the Amendment was ratified by the Ohio Legislature and by three-fourths of the States and women had the right to vote.

When death approached mercilessly in 1929, she faced her illness with a courage and beauty of faith never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Her life of self-mastery served her in good stead.

And so it was that at the 1930 annual meeting of this Association, there was born a movement to honor the memory of this great member. I remember, as though it was yesterday, how we gathered at the Olin Hotel in Denver that July, as as the then president, I can assure you, that most prominent in our minds was the intention to set up some kind of memorial to Gillette Hayden, that would have merited her approval.

It was proposed that in memory of Dr. Hayden there be established a Gillette Hayden Fellowship Fund. We anticipated contributions from members and friends, and had a goal sometime in the future, when the income from the fund would be large enough to support research in some phase of dentistry by a gifted woman. With enthusiasm the vote in favor was unanimous.

Yes, Dr. Hayden had given us a soul, in line with her ideals. This project was to be one that would provide the Association of American Women Dentists with a more important reason for existence, and one that would be of interest to all women dentists.

Two hundred dollars were taken from the treasury of A.A.W.D. to start the Gillette Hayden Fellowship Fund and each succeeding president urged members to make voluntary contributions to it. During the economic depression of the thirties the fund didn't have much momentum, but at the meeting in Buffalo in 1932, when Grace Keith Pulliam was president it was decided to change the name to the Gillette Hayden Scholarship Loan Fund, and put the small amount in the fund to work. Loans would be made to promising women dental students in their junior and senior years, who had the endorsement of the faculty of their respective schools. The first loan was made to Helen Hayes Harman, a junior at the University of Michigan sponsored by Dr. Willa Yerestsky of Grand Rapids. Dr. Harman graduated in 1935 and became a member of this organization, built a successful practice in Grand Rapids and promptly repaid her loan.

Thirty years later, when the tax exempt status of the Fund was questioned, the Internal Revenue Service advised us to separate the Gillette Hayden fund from the A.A.W.D. It is now the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation and has its Headquarters in Atlanta. It is administered by five trustees who are women dentists, members of A.A.W.D. Requests for information concerning loans come from students in many dental schools. The growing number of requests for loans reflect a need to increase the coffers of the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation, and that little half-rounded dream of a group back in 1930 has certainly become a reality.

Many women dental students have benefitted from this fund in the years since then. In the year 1968, for instance, five young women received loans of a thousand dollars each, and there was the expectancy that about three thousand dollars would have been paid back that year by recent graduates.

So many gave of themselves during the past fifty years, that this organization might have all necessary components—Body, Life's-blood, Soul, and Mind. I am thinking of Dr. Evangeline Jordan, our first president, and Dr. Haidee Weeks, that gay vibrant spirit from New Orleans, who turned many an evening banquet into what you younger members would call a "REAL BALL", and Grace Rogers Spalding and Dora Hendrickson, two brilliant minds, two philanthropic spirits; Isabel Hoenes, our generous benefactor, E. Pearle Bishop, the only woman dentist in practice with her son. Oh, I'd need much more time to mention all those who deserve to be mentioned.

It was most remarkable how our organization grew from the 12 charter members to a membership of 200 in two years. For that was its size when the second annual meeting was held in Cleveland, Ohio in 1923, with Ceilia Rich as president, and Evangeline Jordan, the first president, as Vice-president, and Stella Risser, secretary-treasurer.

The Chicago Dental Society for some time had been having a large annual meeting in January or February, which attracted dentists from Coast to Coast and from the South and Mid-West. It was so well attended that it rivaled the A.D.A. meeting in size. The women members of that society had already formed the Chicago Women Dentist's Club, and went all out to show their hospitality to visiting women dentists, by having a headquarters in one of the hotels and a reception for them.

Thus, some women who attended these meetings had the opportunity to know women from other parts of the country. The time was ripe for the growth of a national organization. When women dentists heard of it and received an invitation to join they didn't hesitate, but sent in their dues. So it was that programs were printed and mailed to 200 members for the meeting in Cleveland, and printed in it was "Bring this program with you". It also contained the names of the members. I find in this program the names of members who have been consistent dues paying members ever since—like—Isabelle Hoenes, E. Pearle Bishop, Geneva Growth, Julia Nordstom, Pauline Heibert, Florence Lilley. For me, it was my first meeting and I was very impressed to meet so many outstanding women dentists.

In 1926 the meeting in Philadelphia was a joint meeting of the A.D.A. and the Seventh International. We sought out the foreign women dentists to be guests at our banquet. There were seven from Europe and one from New Zealand. Each was called on to speak about dentistry in her country.

No meetings were held during World War II years, so 1947 was the first meeting following the war. It was held in Boston, and was a joint meeting of the A.D.A. and the 10th International. Dr. Laura Belle Dean was responsible for the arrangements for this meeting and it was outstanding. It was most interesting to talk to a woman from Helsinki, who felt that her country's future was very uncertain.

In 1962, the A.D.A. was meeting in Miami Beach and we had the "missile crisis". Ellen Crocket, Chairman of arrangements had asked an American couple, who had been in business in Cuba for twenty years and were refugees, to tell us of the political situation there. The money we might have spent on entertainment that evening we presented to them to use for their work among Cuban refugees. It was most enlightening to get the facts.



AAWD Evening Reception Held in NYC, 1969

As you know I've been working on a history of the Association for some time, putting together some of the work that the late Dr. Vida Latham compiled on the "Pioneer Women in Dentistry", and doing my own commentary on the fifty years between 1921 and 1971. Just gathering the material, the minutes of meetings, newspaper clippings and personal correspondence has turned out to be a greater task than I envisioned at first. But I hope to finish it this year.

I mention this mostly because I reading the minutes of annual meetings for the past ten years, going over the fantastic buildup of work that has been done by recent officers, Drs. Betty J. Koss, Edith Strauss, Marilyn Stone, Jean Colasanted, Josephine Palancia, Bertha Eastwood, and Virginia R. Park, to mention a few. I am impressed with how sophisticated this organization has become, how routinely almost it does these major chores and I am

convinced that the mental equipment available here will give new meaningful direction to this organization in the days ahead.

It's completed now, the organization's body, put together by 12 distinguished women back in Milwaukee in 1921, given its life-blood in the friendship that all of us have enjoyed over the years, given its soul by the late great Gillette Hayden, and that ever extending mind that all of you gathered here today represent.

Happy anniversary to all of us, and happy anniversary to the dental students, who soon may be affiliated with us, and to all the little girls, who will grow up to be women dentists some day and to do their part for this Association of American Women Dentists.

Mildred W. Dickerson

October 11, 1971



Above: Dr. Gillette Hayden, the “soul” of AAWD according to Dr. Dickerson in her 50th anniversary speech.

Right: Dr. Dickerson authored many publications in her lifetime, this is one of her early works published in JADA in 1924.

IMPORTANT POINTS THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER SHOULD KNOW IN ORDER TO PREVENT DENTAL IRREGULARITIES

By MILDRED W. DICKERSON, D.D.S., Washington, D. C.

(Read before the American Dental Association, Cleveland, Ohio, September 10-14, 1923)

WE HEAR a lot about preventive dentistry these days, and much has been written relative to the diagnosis and prognosis of dental irregularities. My résumé of dental irregularities includes (1) caries of the teeth leading to the death of pulps, followed by an infection of the periapical tissues; (2) all affections of the investing structures of the teeth, tending toward complete disintegration of the periodontium; and (3) the various types of malocclusion with their attendant evils.

Although a great field for the prevention of dental irregularities is opening up through the work on nutrition and dietary control, and although the endocrinologist is striving to prove that many dental irregularities, including immunity or susceptibility to dental caries, depend on the endocrine balance, the general practitioner will have to continue and redouble his efforts in the use of the knowledge he now possesses.

McCollum says, “As a profession we have ignored the developmental factor as the one that is operative in preventive dentistry. There is one way back to better physical development and that is the most fundamental of all, namely, to build up a normal, physical structure, and that can be done only through proper diet. The child of school age is beyond

the reach of help in this respect. His teeth are already formed. This preventive dentistry proposition is largely one of prenatal life and infancy.”

We should all inform ourselves as to the practical research work in nutrition that is being done at the present time, and make use of it in giving our patients, especially parents, the opportunity of learning all that we know concerning the question of diet and the relation it bears to the development and maintenance of healthy teeth as well as healthy bodies. When we can convince the parents of the necessity of placing their children in the dentist's care during babyhood, the period from birth to the completion of the primary dentition, there will be the greatest possibilities for preventing dental irregularities. Knowledge in regard to diet, if put into practice during this period, will be of great value in the development of normal, healthy teeth, because, with the exception of the permanent first molars and central incisors, all of the teeth of the secondary dentition are formed after the child is 2 years of age.

Oral prophylaxis is the prevention of disease in the mouth. The practice of oral prophylaxis includes a complete diagnosis of mouth conditions and all procedures designed to prevent disease,

Jour. A. D. A., March, 1924

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