smiles

A look at African Americans in DENTISTRY

2004 AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY CALENDAR
Dentistry is about cultivating relationships and building trust between dentists and patients. It’s about teaching prevention to children. It’s about recognizing the intimate connection between oral health and general health— and addressing and overcoming disparities in health and dental care.

For its 23rd anniversary edition, Aetna's 2004 Calendar of African American History recognizes the powerful contributions made by enterprising and successful African American oral health care professionals. It features a broad range of stories highlighting academia, military, forensics, geriatrics, pediatrics, hygiene and public health. The year culminates with a story about six students from Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry, that highlights their passion to serve the underserved.

Explore the evolution of the toothbrush from the first "tooth" brush to today's colorful and playful children's tools such as Brushtime Bunny®. Meet the unsung heroes of dentistry such as Colonel Sidney Alan Brooks, Sr., who addresses the dental needs of the entire U.S. Army. Discover the importance of shaping oral health literacy that is understood and embraced by African Americans through the late Dr. W. Lee在 the rich heritage of African American dental professionals through the words of respected author and historian Clifton O. Dummett, D.D.S.

Since 1982, Aetna's calendar has recognized the outstanding contributions of African Americans, past and present, in fields such as athletics, politics, business, medicine and entertainment. In addition to the printed version, the 2004 calendar will be featured online at: www.aetna.com/diversity/aahcalendar/2004/index.html

On the web site, viewers can enjoy more historical details on dentistry, along with additional in-depth information on the featured dental professionals.

Each day, African American dental professionals around the country work diligently to improve oral health and light up smiles. Filled with endless opportunities, dentistry has evolved over the last three centuries from a profession of teeth restoration to a respected discipline of practitioners with a passion for health and disease prevention.

Dentistry wouldn’t be what it is today and we couldn’t have the same bright hopes for the future if we didn’t have such an illustrious past. I hope, through this calendar, you’ll enjoy learning more about that past and the critical role African Americans play in oral health care today and in the future.

Ronald Inge, D.D.S.
Chief Dental Officer
Aetna Inc.
Playing softball on the streets in Harlem carries inter-
resent memories for Dr. Caswell Evans. As a young age, 
while memorizing a half from the fire escape, he fell and
pushed his tooth up into his gum. “It was the rules of ‘the
hood’ to retrieve your own ball, probably to encourage you
to get a home run,” laughed Dr. Evans, an avid toy
train collector.

After spending many days in the orthodontist’s chair to
repair the damage, he decided that wasn’t how he’d like
or want to spend his future. Fortunate to attend Columbia
University dental school, Dr. Evans decided to direct his
career path toward public health because he felt preven-
tion was equally as important as treatment. “In dental
school, we were taught restorative methods using gold. I
knew that was expensive, which got me to thinking there
ought to be a way to retrieve your own ball, probably to encourage your
to get a home run,” laughed Dr. Evans, an avid toy
train collector.

"To be part of fashioning that message and to pull all this
together has been very rewarding. It’s a one-of-a-kind
experience. For the U.S. Surgeon General to publish a
report on oral health underscores its importance," said
Dr. Evans.

The biggest challenge he sees is getting the general public
to appreciate the importance of oral health. Dr. Evans
believes “it’s about oral health literacy. The words we speak.
The food we eat. Our smile. The emotions we express. Our
sense of self. The ability to get a job. These are
all intimately connected to oral health.”

Caswell A. Evans, Jr., D.D.S., M.P.H.

Caswell A. Evans, Jr., D.D.S., M.P.H. Potomac, MD

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Tooth Powders

Fifty years of tooth powder tins, dating from the 1890s through the 1940s.
## African American History Calendar

**02/04**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>W</th>
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<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1865: John Adams Bank, noted Boston lawyer, becomes first black to teach at a white college in U.S. (SamuelCornelius)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1816: Complete ban on foreign slave trade. (Carroll D. Battle) paternity actions (Hernandez v. Texas)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1860: Aaron Lyman Smith at the first black student at the University of Alabama.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1833: Key was a hero of the Battle of New Orleans.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1869: John Blake, 18-year-old African American champion, dies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1915: Biologist Ernest Just receives Spingarn Medal for egg fertilization.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1923: In Moore v. Dempsey decision, Supreme Court guarantees due process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1807: Congress bans foreign slave trade.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1940: Actress Hattie McDaniel becomes first black to win an Oscar (Gone With The Wind).</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1884: Willis Johnson patents eggbeater.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1883: Ragtime pianist and composer Eubie Blake born.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1965: Civil rights activist Jimmie Lee Jackson dies after being shot by state police in Marion, Alabama.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1853: First black YMCA organized in Washington, D.C.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1898: Melvin B. Tolson, educator, author and poet, born.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1964: Arthur Ashe Jr. becomes first black on U.S. Davis Cup team.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1984: Michael Jackson, musician and entertainer, wins eight Grammy Awards.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1989: Col. Frederick D. Gregory becomes first African American to command a space shuttle mission.</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1913: Rosa Parks, civil rights pioneer who sparked 1955 Montgomery protest in Orangeburg, South Carolina.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
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<td>1940: Actress Hattie McDaniel becomes first black to win an Oscar (Gone With The Wind).</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1988: Debi Thomas becomes first African American to win an Olympic medal in figure skating.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1956: Autherine Lucy enrolls as the first black student at the University of Alabama.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1992: Alex Haley, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, dies.</td>
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**Winifred J. Booker**

**D.D.S.** Owings Mills, MD

For years, Dr. Winifred Booker saw parents struggling to get their children to brush their teeth. Children would share with her a handful of excuses why they couldn’t brush. So she decided to create something that would make a lasting impression on children. Enter Brushtime Bunny®, a dental hygiene delivery aide that gives children a fun way to take care of their teeth. Brushtime Bunny features a rinse cup, toothbrush and toothpaste designed especially for kids; tasty dental floss; and a whimsical song. The idea was conceived while Dr. Booker was flipping through the retail circulars just before Easter.

“I thought with all this candy, and much of it in the shape of a bunny, no wonder kids love carrots. And then the idea came to me. I wrote it down; and two years later I started Brushtime Products, Inc., a company that manufactures child-friendly dental hygiene products,” said Dr. Booker. That’s only one small carrot in her daily work. Most of the time she’s leading her private dental practice, Valley Dental Pediatrics, and she’s also the founder of the Maryland Oral Health Institute, an organization created to combat dental neglect and oral abuse among children.

“It is a very big challenge to educate parents on the importance of early dental health care prevention,” she said, noting baby bottle tooth decay as a serious and persistent problem, especially among low-income populations. The condition arises when babies are put to bed with their bottles, or they are given their bottles or sips with sweet juices or milk all day. “For many of these children we have to do comprehensive dental rehabilitation under general anesthesia,” she said, adding that in her practice alone there is a waiting list for surgery.

Dr. Booker works hard to strengthen good practices for children and parents by showing that she can be trusted. “I engage the children. I share language that they will appreciate,” she said. She refers to needles as sleepy drops and the suction as Mr. Thirsty. She also makes sure she waxes one on every Saturday so she can talk about it with her patients. “They love that I know what is going on with Delta the Explorer and Oswald the Octopus,” she added.

“I absolutely love working with children, improving their dental and general health, elevating their self-esteem and giving them a reason to smile.”

Winifred J. Booker, D.D.S.

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**Dentist Bear**

Battery-operated Dentist Bear with drilling handpiece and Crying Bear, circa 1950.

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**Pediatric Dentistry**

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D.D.S. Owings Mills, MD

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Winifred J. Booker, D.D.S.
To be able to start programs, open facilities, provide access to care for people who didn’t have access before, change children’s lives, develop a mobile vehicle program. The things that I do make a difference in lives every day.

Dennis Mitchell, D.D.S., M.P.H.
April

1  T  1935: Ethnic research pioneer Charles E. Dorsey dies.

2  F  1893: Minnie Fee, actress, is born.

3  S  1919: Writer and civil rights activist Zora Neale Hurston dies.

4  S  1920: Baseball player Joe Cronin is born.

5  F  1957: First African American to receive a Black Belt in the martial art of Tae Kwon Do.

6  T  1994: Civil rights leader John Lewis is born.

7  W  1979: Basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson is born.

8  T  1983: The film "The Color Purple" is released.

9  F  1972: Dr. Vincent Porter becomes the first black certified in plastic surgery.


11  F  1955: Seven-year-old Elizabeth Taylor is married to her second husband, actor Mickey Hargitay.

12  T  1972: The film "A Raisin in the Sun" is released.


14  T  1964: Baseball player Hank Aaron hits his 715th career home run, surpassing Babe Ruth as the game's all-time home-run leader.


16  T  1986: Walter Mondale is elected vice president of the United States.

17  W  1972: The movie "Lilies of the Field" is released.

18  T  1950: Historian Carter G. Woodson is born.

19  W  1898: Paul Robeson, actor, singer, activist, is born.

20  T  1909: Matthew A. Henson reaches the North Pole, 45 minutes before Robert E. Peary.

21  W  1888: Sarah Boone patents the ironing board.

22  T  1959: Lorraine Hansberry becomes the first black playwright to win a Pulitzer Prize.

23  W  1901: Henry Ford opens his assembly line to the public.

24  T  1918: Ella Fitzgerald is born.

25  W  1899: Percy Julian, developer of physostigmine and synthetic cortisone, is born.

26  T  1962: Dr. Henry Heimlich is born.

27  W  1990: Sarah Vaughan is born.

28  T  1974: Atlanta Braves slugger Hank Aaron hits his 715th career home run, surpassing Babe Ruth as the game's all-time home-run leader.

29  W  1974: Atlanta Braves slugger Hank Aaron hits his 715th career home run, surpassing Babe Ruth as the game's all-time home-run leader.

30  T  1939: Cinque leads the Amistad mutiny off the coast of Long Island.

31  W  1775: First abolitionist society in the U.S. is founded in Philadelphia.


Dr. Hazel Harper always had a desire to work with her hands. As a student at Howard University with medical aspirations, she was convinced by her mentor and then associate dean Dr. Jeannie Smiklform to enter dentistry. "What excited me about dentistry is being able to shape a smile and change a personality, helping others develop self-confidence and self-esteem because they are proud of their teeth," said Dr. Harper.

Today, after nearly three decades in the profession, she knows she made the right choice. "What excites me about dentistry is being able to shape a smile and change a personality, helping others develop self-confidence and self-esteem because they are proud of their teeth," said Dr. Harper.

Her career began as a junior faculty member at Howard University College of Dentistry. Seven years later, she made a life-changing decision to enter private practice. But it wasn’t a typical practice — it was the opportunity to build a multispecialty office in Washington, D.C., with five dentists, nine treatment rooms and 20 staff members.

“Tigers intend to work in a clinical setting, but sometimes your purpose in life evolves,” said Dr. Harper, who emphasizes to all of her patients how important oral health is to the rest of the body. “We help patients put a smile on their face and change a personality; helping others develop self-confidence and self-esteem because they are proud of their teeth.”


Dr. Harper also has had the opportunity to serve as the executive editor of the Journal of the National Dental Association, where she wrote numerous articles on serving the underserved. She was intellectually stimulated by it, she said. “I now have so much respect for people who put together the written word.”

As for the future, Dr. Harper, a proud mother and new grandmother, said, “I dream of having input into the transformation of a culture of crisis into a culture of prevention. We have to ensure that we provide community health education, that providers are culturally sensitive, and that everyone has access to care.”

PRIVATE PRACTICE, COMMUNITY DENTISTRY & EDUCATION

Hazel Juanita Harper
D.D.S., M.P.H.
Washington, DC

She still enjoys her roots in education, and over the years more than 35 dental students have trained in her office. “I’m proud that they are now practicing all over the country,” said Dr. Harper, who now is one of the co-owners of the Rittenhouse Dental Group. “I hope to be a role model for each of them, and be as good as those who have taught me.” She recalls the impact her mentors and father made when she was an outspoken, overtaken child in a dental class of mostly men. “Mediocrity was not an option.”

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Dental Cabinet

This cabinet, one of 300 manufactured between 1930 and 1933 by the American Cabinet Company, was modeled after an actual house in Two Rivers, Wisconsin.
When Dr. Jeanne Sinkford decided she wanted to be a dentist in the late 1960s, there were no female role models for her to emulate. Her father, she said, thought it was too crazy. She had to deal with this odd woman. Fortunately, now there are nine women deans at 56 dental schools across the country.

It was very challenging. My race wasn’t the barrier. It was more of the mental barrier with the men in the field,” she said. “I was not their colleague, which made it difficult.”

They had to deal with this odd woman. Fortunately, now there are nine women deans at 56 dental schools across the country.

Much like medicine, the number of women entering the field of dentistry is on the rise, said Dr. Sinkford, who now works on women and minority recruitment and retention with the American Dental Education Association. “Women bring intelligence and energy to the profession. They are goal oriented, compassionate and retain their teeth; they want to keep their beautiful smiles.” Changes within the oral health care delivery system, she said, must be addressed, particularly as they relate to those who lack access to care and those whoاضع فصلية مقال عن ديناميكية المحاسبة البلغارية ودورها في الاقتصاد الرقمي الحديث. تتناول المقالasics of corporate and tax laws, with an emphasis on the impact of digital technologies on business practices and legal frameworks. Discuss the emerging trends in digital accounting, including blockchain and artificial intelligence, and their implications for financial reporting and compliance. Evaluate the role of technology in enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of accounting systems. Highlight the challenges faced by businesses and regulators in adapting to the changing landscape of digital finance. Explore the potential benefits and risks of adopting digital technologies in accounting practices.
"In orthodontics, most of the time it's elective and people want to be there. They are happy, not stressed or stressed out."

C. Neil Nicholson, D.D.S.

ORTHODONTICS

C. Neil Nicholson

D.D.S. Seattle, WA

Dr. C. Neil Nicholson wanted a career that would not be taken over by computers, a profession where his talents would not cease to be relevant. Music production was his first love, but after observing a local dentist and working as a dental assistant, he realized orthodontics was where he wanted to be. "In orthodontics, most of the time it’s elective and people want to be there. They are happy, not tense or stressed out," he said. "Actually, a lot of people fall asleep in the chair when I’m working on them because they are so comfortable."

Dr. Nicholson went down a long, rough road to get to this peaceful place. Raised by his grandmother—a single mom who died three months after his own mother — he took over the guardianship of his two younger brothers at age 13. To pay the bills, he put school temporarily on hold and worked as a dental assistant. "I was focused, set my priorities and believed in myself," he said. "They are keeping their teeth longer. My oldest patient is a young 70, and I have several patients in their sixties." Dr. Nicholson became a medical student, then a Harvard dental graduate, who inspired and supported him through his own orthodontic education and later became his wife.

Today, Dr. Nicholson has his own orthodontics practice in Seattle, where he’s entrusted with transforming people’s smiles. "I always tell my patients that it is not how fast I can do it, it’s how good I can do it." Usually, his patients are excited when the braces are first put on, but midway through the cycle they tire of them. "Every day, several times a day, I hear, ‘When am I getting my braces off?’" he quips.

Growing up poor has made Dr. Nicholson keenly aware of health care disparities. "One of my institutions has been to provide free and assist people in getting care," he said. "We have to continue to teach the priorities of health care. A lot of people have a perception of health care, but they are focused on one thing. They don’t realize it’s the whole body. It’s not just teeth or eyes. It’s overall health issues.

"Dental hygiene has to be under control before I even think about putting on braces," said Dr. Nicholson, the father of two boys with wife of 22 years, Bee. He’s turned away patients who have holes in their teeth and advises them to focus on basic hygiene. Contrary to beliefs, orthodontics is not limited to the young. Older adults are getting their teeth straightened today with braces because they are losing their teeth longer. My oldest patient is a young 70, and I have several patients in their sixties."

With patients ages 7 to 70, Dr. Nicholson says making them look good is easy. "I want to be sure that the upper and lower jaw work together in a functional way. When there’s clicking and popping in can be painful. There are many problems people can have with their jaws, such as temporomandibular disorder, TMD, or muscle aches, which can be caused by clenching or grinding teeth in the night or stressed out.

Now at the peak of his practice growth, Dr. Nicholson hopes to dedicate more time to organized dentistry by becoming more active with local and national committees and community activities. He’s currently involved with the Washington State Association of Black Health Care Professionals, a group of health care providers who collectively share information and host public health care events.

"Despite the life’s long journey, I’m satisfied and feel that today is the best day of my life."

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Toothbrush

Branches of trees have been handmade into toothbrushes in some cultures. Surprisingly, this method is still practiced in some parts of the United States.
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY CALENDAR

U.S. ARMY DENTAL CORPS

Colonel Sidney Alan Brooks, Sr.
D.D.S.
Fort Sam Houston, TX

After six years of sleeping on the ground with the troops, Colonel Sidney Alan Brooks decided to follow in the footsteps of military friend Dr. Fred Sykes and serve the military by improving the oral health of its soldiers — a decision that would make his grandfather, who also was a dentist, proud.

Despite thinking he’d stay in the Army practicing dentistry for the rest of his life, Brooks decided to redeploy to Syria in 2016 and eventually used his administrative skills to promote dental care throughout the Army. After four years in Syria, he returned to the United States and was appointed Chief of Dental Services in the Office of the Surgeon General.

Today, Colonel Brooks commands 4,000 men and women of the U.S. Army Dental Corps. He’s never stationed in one location for very long because his medical soldiers are running dental clinics — some stand-alone, others created in schools, churches or courtyards — in 23 countries.

“You have a dual profession in military dentistry. One profession is being a dentist; the other profession is being an Army officer.”

Colonel Sidney Alan Brooks, Sr., D.D.S.

Colonel Brooks added, “You’re not able to build relationships with patients because soldiers move on. You can develop a treatment plan for one patient and you may never see them again because someone else is treating them. But everyone else sees your work, so you have to be sure you’re doing a good job.”

While he’d love to have a boat and sail away into military retirement, Colonel Brooks was a future in his own private dental practice in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He also hopes to spend more time with his wife of 29 years, Colonel Marilyn Hughes, who is stationed with the Army Nurse Corps in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The couple get to see each other only once every five or six weeks.

“Tobacco use ruins a lot of our patients’ lives. It’s one of the most preventable diseases in the world. We have the opportunity to make a difference every day. It’s why I’m in this profession.”

Colonel Brooks says his experience as a dentist, dental officer and command chief of dental services has taught him that everyone has a role to play in helping our patients live a healthy life. He encourages everyone to be proactive in their own health and help others do the same.

“Tobacco use is a disease with no cure. It’s preventable, but if you’re a current smoker, it’s never too late to quit.”

Life Mask

This life mask represents the custom of filing. As practiced in Africa, this may have been an attempt to intimidate enemies by creating a ferocious appearance.
August

1  S  1971: Mary Eliza Mahoney graduates from New England Hospital for Women and Children, becoming the first black professional nurse.
2  M  1848: Henry Highland Garnett calls for a general strike by slaves.
3  T  1865: Polar explorer Matthew Henson born.
4  W  1926: Carter Woodson, historian, author, inaugurates Negro History Week.
5  T  1923: Jesse Owens wins fourth gold medal at Summer Olympics in Berlin.
6  F  1936: Jesse Owens wins fourth gold medal at Summer Olympics in Berlin.
7  S  1949: Lawyer-activist Archibald Henry Grimké, who challenged segregationist policies of President Woodrow Wilson, born.
8  S  1831: Nat Turner leads slave revolt in Virginia.
9  S  1989: Congressman Mickey Leland dies in plane crash during a humanitarian mission to Ethiopia.
10  T  1977: Steven Biko, leader of Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, arrested.
11  W  1981: Reagan administration undertakes its review of 30 federal regulations, including rules on civil rights to prevent job discrimination.
13  F  1993: Dr. David Satcher named director of the Centers for Disease Control.
14  S  1908: National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses founded by Martha Minerva Franklin.
15  S  1831: Harriet Wilson's "Our Nig" published.
16  S  1836: Granville T. Woods patents electromechanical brake.
17  F  1888: Granville T. Woods patents electromechanical brake.
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27  W  1872: Solomon Carter Fuller, acknowledged as first black astronaut in space.
28  T  1843: Henry Highland Garnett calls for a general strike by slaves.
29  F  1848: Henry Highland Garnett calls for a general strike by slaves.
30  S  1926: Carter Woodson, historian, author, inaugurates Negro History Week.
31  S  1831: Nat Turner leads slave revolt in Virginia.

08/04

ACADEMIA & ORAL/MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

Lonnie H. Norris
D.M.D., M.P.H. Boston, MA

“Got involved completely.” These are words of wisdom that Dr. Lonnie Norris lives by. Through his 25-year academic and surgical career, he has given his all. In return, he’s been more fulfilled than he could ever imagined.

A Houston, Texas, native, Dr. Norris rose to the top at Boston’s Tufts University School of Dental Medicine where he was named dean of the nation’s second-largest dental school in 1996. Today, he oversees 700 dental students, who have the opportunity to practice in a state-of-the-art dental simulation lab and provide oral care to more than 60,000 patients a year in the school’s modernized clinics.

His passion for dentistry came about late in life after working for eight years as a plastics engineer for Ford Motor Corporation and then the U.S. Army. “The critical influence in someone’s decision to enter the oral health profession can come at any time. I looked at where I could make the most impact and wanted more independence. I was good at working with my hands, and I wanted more interaction with people,” Dr. Norris said. “Many of my college classmates entered into health-care profession schools immediately after graduation, and that influenced my career decisions. Now I am one of the few African American dental school deans in the 56 dental schools across the country.”

Along with his academic leadership role, Dr. Norris still works one day a week at the school’s Dental Faculty Practice and at the New England Medical Center Hospital. “I’ve always enjoyed patient practice – making diagnoses and delivering care to restore health. When you work as a dean you have a much broader scope. You need communication skills and trust to get people to work as a team to accomplish goals. A big impact is made when decisions for change affect clinical operations and dental education in the entire school. Planning with your team does not always lead to immediate results. Thus, administration and patient care for me is a balance between long-term and patient care for me is a balance between long-term and short-term outcomes that affect individuals.”

Through his work in oral and maxillofacial surgery, Dr. Norris has performed minor surgeries such as removal of impacted teeth and placement of dental implants; and major surgeries in hospitals involving facial trauma, and facial birth and growth defects; and also has consulted on heart-transplant patients. Physicians consult with Dr. Norris and his faculty to determine if there are decaying teeth in organ-transplant patients, which may cause acute infections resulting in complications to the transplant. “There is a direct relationship of oral health to systemic health,” he said.

As for the future, Dr. Norris knows he will always provide service. “The future involves using my position as dean to address the challenges of dental education, provide health-care opportunity to a diverse student body, and influence the issue of disparities of oral health for underrepresented populations,” he said.

"I’ve always enjoyed patient practice – making diagnoses and delivering care to restore health. When you work as a dean you have a much broader scope.”

Lonnie H. Norris, D.M.D., M.P.H.

Dental Instrument

Penknife-style pocket dental instrument, that includes a pelican, a goat’s foot elevator, a screw elevator and a straight elevator, used for extracting teeth in the early 19th century.
“Elders inspire me to continue to do what I do,” said Dr. Ann Slaughter, geriatric dentist specialist and assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Her parents each had a scientific background, and throughout childhood she enjoyed spending time with her grandmother and her friends, “so choosing public health seemed natural for me.”

Education and clinical dentistry set the pace during her early career, until she was encouraged to apply for the Brookdale National Fellowship Program, a national endowment that funded aging research. “They heard my ideas and decided to give dentistry a chance,” said Dr. Slaughter. She spent two years working at the University of Connecticut’s Travelers Center on Aging, where she interacted with elderly patients in community settings and collaborated with other medical professionals as part of the program’s interdisciplinary training.

Today through her work at the university, Dr. Slaughter is developing an educational program, “Take Charge of Your Oral Health,” which will be delivered to African American seniors citizens in suburban community centers. “We need to raise public awareness about oral signs and symptoms so African American elders will know when they need to go to dentists,” Dr. Slaughter says.

“We are developing a program that’s culturally sensitive. We are talking on their terms and using their language,” she said. “We’re also promoting an intergenerational theme, hoping the elders will provide the messages to their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We need to plant the seeds for the future and change oral health beliefs as the children grow up.”

Elder patients, she said, must be approached differently because of past perceptions. “I have had to work very hard and diligently to establish trusting relationships within the community,” she said. “When these elders were young, dental care didn’t focus much on prevention. They’ve always associated going to the dentist with the fear of getting their teeth pulled. So there are filters over the issues of trust. I had to earn it from them. And that was a challenge.”

While addicted to her work, Dr. Slaughter relaxes once in a while by taking in a classic Humphrey Bogart black movie or reading a suspense novel by Richard North Patterson. “Those are the types of education activities that I enjoy,” she said.

Though passionate about all aspects of her field, she’s most proud that her geriatric research was recently featured in Jet magazine. “Proneness is the key. Just keep moving,” she shared as her words to live by. “I plan to continue building on what I’ve got, and I hope to make a contribution to reduce health care disparities.”

Ann Slaughter, D.D.S., M.P.H.
“I like being in an environment where you can make a positive difference. Most people are afraid of the dentist, but if you can put them at ease, the benefits of prevention and oral health are endless.”

Katie Dawson, R.H.D., B.S.

While her lifelong dream is to one day be a backup singer for Luther Vandross, dental hygienist Katie Dawson appreciates the work she currently does each day with patients of all ages. “I like being in a atmosphere where you can make a positive difference. Most people are afraid of the dentist, but if you can put them at ease, the benefits of prevention and oral health are endless,” she said.

She especially enjoys introducing young children to the dental chair. “We try to get them to want to do what their parents are doing. We count teeth with them and shine a light in their mouths. When it’s time to have their teeth gently checked, they can’t wait for the appointment,” she said.

For elderly patients, Ms. Dawson said, her focus is on helping them eat. “I try to put them at ease and give them something to eat. I have watched patients eat foggy for the first time in years. I think that’s empowering.”

For elderly patients, Ms. Dawson said, her focus is on helping them eat. “I try to put them at ease and give them something to eat. I have watched patients eat foggy for the first time in years. I think that’s empowering.”
In 1974 with two NFL Super Bowls under his belt, football pro John Williams decided to pursue his passion for dentistry. Then playing for the Baltimore Colts, he went to college during the off season to earn a dental degree from the University of Maryland at Baltimore. He officially retired from the NFL in 1980 after 12 years and established a dental practice in the inner city of Minneapolis.

“Part of our responsibility as dentists is to motivate and educate, as well as treat,” said Dr. Williams, who welcomes the opportunity to encourage his patients, especially impressionable youth. “Over the past 23 years, we have made a tough decision — to stay or to relocate to the suburbs. He was determined to stay in the city and make a difference. Today he’s proud of the choice he made. "The city is starting to come back; my patients respect what I did; they continue to come, and their children and grandchildren are now patients," he said.

Each day, besides getting up, which he calls a blessing, Dr. Williams welcomes "being a good neighbor by providing service to my community, as well as to people in need. We cannot turn our backs on people who are suffering from health care disparities. If all dental and medical professionals participate, we can address the problems."

However, he recognizes responsibility also needs to rest on individuals. “There is a personal responsibility to participate in preventive care instead of getting into a crisis situation," he said.

Dr. Williams, the father of three adult boys with wife, Barbara Butts Williams, is also a pilot and is closely involved with the Prison Ministry Team. “We go in thinking that we are giving something to them, but we end up on the receiving end. It’s so gratifying to see the growth of so many of these men.”

George Washington’s Dentures

Set of dentures made by John Greenwood for George Washington that were greatly improved in 1798 at Washington’s direction.
Dr. Cherae Farmer-Dixon can relate to the students she counsels every day at Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry. That’s because 15 years ago, this anesthesiologist and admittance chairwoman was a student working diligently to complete four years of dental study at the historically black college located in Nashville, Tennessee.

“It’s particularly gratifying to watch students enter into the unknown of dental school and graduate as extraordinary dental health providers,” said Dr. Farmer-Dixon. Meharry’s School of Dentistry, whose mission is to serve the underserved, accepts only 55 dental students each year.

What attracted Dr. Farmer-Dixon to the college in 1986 is what keeps her there today. “It’s a place where everyone knows your name,” she said. “It’s a close-knit family environment. And it’s typical that students come to me at all hours, even on the weekends, for advice.”

Getting out into the community to serve the underserved is what Meharry students are motivated to do when they enter the school — particularly those students who are selected as scholars of the National Health Services Corps, a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. While in school the students participate in extracurricular activities while at Meharry. David, from Mobile, Alabama, has spent many weekends working at the Children’s Oral Health Institute, preparing for a career in pediatric dentistry. He also had the opportunity to work with migrant workers during a summer weekend program hosted by the University of Rochester, New York.

Kevin, from Mobile, Alabama, has spent many weekends working at the Children’s Oral Health Institute, preparing for a career in pediatric dentistry. He also had the opportunity to work with migrant workers during a summer weekend program hosted by the University of Rochester, New York.

Each year, Erin and Audrey look forward to Community Day at Meharry, where they provide dental screenings to local children, and Healthy Happy Halloween, where they teach children what and what not to eat. “They should eat apples, choose parsley to clean their teeth,” said one of the students. Erin hopes to go home to California to establish a practice specifically for patients with special needs, while Audrey, from Oviedo, Florida, plans to pursue pediatric dentistry.

Senior students Talisha Mason and Enrol Isaac had the opportunity to provide dental care to the homeless through their outreach in SEARCH — Student Experience and Rotation in Community Health. “It’s particularly gratifying,” said Talisha, adding that these opportunities strengthen students and provide perspective on how their career paths will unfold. Enrol, who would sometimes see 10 patients before lunch, saw it as an opportunity to put his dental education into practice.

Talisha, who grew up in Newark, New Jersey, will be pursuing pediatric dentistry, while Audrey, from Oviedo, Florida, is planning to pursue pediatric dentistry.

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Dr. Dummett was one of the first three dentists in the nation and the first dentist appointed health center director at the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1960, he became the first member of the dental faculty at the University of Southern California to be elected president of the International Association for Dental Research. In 1972, Dr. Dummett was inducted into the board of the American Association of Dental Editors. He served two separate terms as chairman of American Association for the Advancement of Science. A former editor and chairman of the Board of Directors of the American Association of Dental Editors, he served 23 years as a member of the National Dental Association. In 1977, he was the only dentist appointed as a member of the U.S. President’s Commission on National Health Insurance.

Dr. Dummett is past president of the Los Angeles Dental Society, the American Academy of the History of Dentistry and the American Association for Dental Editors. He has been a member of the Union of Medical Scientists, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Achievement, the National Academy of Medicine, the Institute of Medicine. He was appointed to the Institute's Council and served as chair of the program on Community Health and education. He currently is a senior member of the institution.

Dr. Dummett has been a consultant to numerous dental organizations and educational institutions. He has served on the boards of directors of many professional and educational organizations. He has served as a consultant to many governmental agencies and private companies. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of the National Dental Association and the California Dental Association. Dr. Dummett is a member of the American Academy of the History of Dentistry and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has also been a member of the National Academy of Medicine, the Institute of Medicine. He was appointed to the Institute’s Council and served as chair of the program on Community Health and education. He currently is a senior member of the institution.

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Dr. Dummett’s contributions to New Directions are acknowledged in the following articles: "Contributions to New Directions: Volume I. The Story of America's Second National Dental Association. Dental Education at Meharry Medical College: Origin and Odyssey; Afro-Americans in Dentistry."

Dr. Dummett has 14 years of private-practice experience. He holds a doctor of dental surgery degree from the University of Washington and a doctor of dental surgery degree from the University of Southern California. He is a member of the American Association of Dental Editors. He has been a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Achievement, the National Academy of Medicine, the Institute of Medicine. He was appointed to the Institute’s Council and served as chair of the program on Community Health and education. He currently is a senior member of the institution.

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INFORMATION ABOUT

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T o date, the calendar has profiled more than 250 individuals –

salutes some of the most dynamic and earnest African

African American dentists, past and present, and proudly

Biographies

Colin Brooks completed his residency training in Comprehensive Dentistry at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1998. He assumed Board Certification in his specialty in March 1999. A 1984 graduate of Howard University College of Dentistry, Dr. Brooks has been practicing Comprehensive Dentistry at Fort Bragg Dental Activity since 1998. Before assignment at his current position at Fort Bragg Dental Activity and the Army, he was assigned to the Ophthalmic Dispensary Service Module from the Department of Defense for the State of Georgia.

Lennie H. Norris, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Dr. Lennie H. Norris was appointed cònceal in July 1995, to the Dean of the Tulane School of Dentistry in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the university’s first black dean and its second female dean. He has been a faculty member at Tulane University School of Dental Medicine since 1986. He holds degrees in dental medicine and masters of public health degrees from Harvard University before completing a postgraduate residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery and a dentofacial orthognathic degree from Oral Medicine School in Nashville, Tennessee.

A former captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps in the late 60’s and 70’s, Dr. Norris volunteered in a psychiatric research and processing center at Ford Motor Company’s research and development department in Dearborn. He completed his dental training at Harvard University.

Dr. Norris’ research is focused on addressing and health disparities from a cultural and historical context among minority and low-income ethnic groups. Currently, he is the principal investigator on a study that explores the oral health behavior and policy implications for African American elders in Northeast Philadelphia. The objective of the study is to develop community-based intervention strategies to promote oral and health care among African American elders.

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Since 1982, Aetna has recognized the outstanding contributions of African Americans with the annually published calendars. The calendar, which features biographical profiles and photographs for each professional, offers an opportunity to learn more about the dental and oral health professionals and the education that lead to success in today’s world. In honor of history and culture.

The history of African Americans is rich with cognizant and inspirational moments that reach many of American history and culture. To this purpose, 2004 Aetna Calendar is proud to feature the achievements of African American dentists and professionals and to feature yet another chapter in the history of African Americans.

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