

GUMLINE

THE WESTERN SOCIETY OF PERIODONTOLOGY



Thomas J. Kepic, DDS, MSD
WSP Gum Line Editor

SHOWING UP MATTERS

Professional Visibility Through Service & Participation

There is an old saying that much of success in life comes simply from showing up.

Over the years, I have come to believe there is a great deal of truth in that statement—especially in our profession.

Professional visibility is sometimes misunderstood. It can sound like self-promotion or an effort to be noticed. But that is not what I mean by visibility. The kind of professional visibility that matters most is rarely created by calling attention to ourselves. More

often, it develops naturally when we participate, contribute, serve, and remain engaged with our colleagues over time.

In other words, we become known because we show up.

We show up for meetings.

We show up for continuing education.

We show up for committee assignments.

We show up when a colleague asks for help.

We show up for residents and younger clinicians who need encouragement.

We show up when an organization needs volunteers. And sometimes, perhaps most importantly, we simply show up to listen.

One of the benefits of belonging to a professional organization such as the Western Society of Periodontology is that it provides countless opportunities to do exactly that.

Visibility Begins with Participation

Many years ago, when I first became involved in organized dentistry and periodontics, I certainly was not thinking about "professional visibility." I was thinking about learning.

I wanted to hear good speakers. I wanted to meet experienced clinicians. I wanted to discuss difficult cases. I wanted to become better at what I did for my patients.

But something else happened along the way.

The more meetings I attended, the more people I came to know. The more I participated, the more conversations I had. Those conversations became professional relationships, and many of those professional relationships eventually became friendships.

That process does not occur overnight.

It happens gradually.

A colleague sees you at one meeting and then another. Perhaps you ask a question after a lecture. Maybe you sit together at lunch. At another meeting you discuss a clinical problem. Later, one of you calls the other for advice.

Before long, you are no longer simply two names on a membership roster.

You know one another.

That is professional visibility at its best.

A Lesson From More Than Four Decades

When I think about the people I have known through the Western Society of Periodontology, one person who immediately comes to mind is Dr. Gerald Drury.

I have known Jerry longer, and interacted with him more consistently over the course of four decades, than perhaps any other periodontist in my professional life.

What struck me early on was his complete commitment to the organization.

He did not appear to have a personal agenda.

He was simply committed to the WSP and to helping it succeed.

That kind of service makes an impression.

It is not loud. It is not self-promotional. It does not need to be.

People notice consistency. They notice dedication. They notice the individual who continues to contribute year after year because the organization itself matters.

To me, that is one of the best examples of what "showing up" really means.

You Do Not Have to Be at the Podium

It is easy to assume that professional recognition belongs primarily to the people giving the lectures or holding elected office.

Those are certainly important ways to contribute, but they are far from the only ones.

You can become a valued member of a professional community without ever standing behind a podium.

Perhaps you welcome a new member at a meeting.

Perhaps you introduce yourself to a resident who does not know anyone in the room.

Perhaps you participate in a committee.

Perhaps you share an interesting clinical experience during a discussion.

Perhaps you send a note to a colleague after an excellent presentation.

Perhaps you volunteer when something needs to be done.

These may seem like small actions.

They are not.

Organizations are built upon them.

And over time, people remember the individuals who consistently participate, contribute, and help others.

Service Creates Its Own Kind of Recognition

There is another important distinction.

Recognition should not necessarily be the goal of service.

Service itself is the goal.

But recognition often becomes a byproduct of meaningful service.

When people see that you are willing to give your time, share your experience, help solve a problem, or support a colleague, they begin to understand something about who you are.

Your professional reputation is being formed—not through advertising, but through actions.

I have been fortunate to participate in organized periodontics for many years, and some of the most rewarding opportunities I have received came from simply agreeing to help when someone asked.

One committee assignment leads to another responsibility. One professional relationship leads to an introduction. One conversation leads to an opportunity to teach, mentor, serve, or collaborate.

None of us can predict where those moments may lead.

But first, we have to be there.

The Importance of Showing Up for the Next Generation

There is another side to professional visibility that becomes increasingly important as our careers progress.

Younger clinicians are watching.

Residents and early-career periodontists notice the people who attend meetings, ask thoughtful questions, volunteer, teach, and make themselves available.

They are looking for examples of what a professional life can look like.

Sometimes mentorship begins formally. More often, however, it begins with a conversation.

A young periodontist asks a question.

Someone takes the time to answer.

A relationship begins.

This is one of the great strengths of organizations such as the Western Society of Periodontology. They bring together clinicians at many different stages of their careers and create opportunities for those conversations to occur.

But once again, the opportunity only exists if we show up.

Seventy-Five Years of Showing Up

Next year, the Western Society of Periodontology will celebrate its 75th anniversary. That is a remarkable milestone.

Organizations do not reach 75 years because of one person, one meeting, or one generation of leadership. They endure because, year after year, people are willing to participate, serve, teach, organize, mentor, and contribute.

In many ways, the history of the WSP is a history of people showing up.

As we count down to the 75th anniversary meeting, I will have the privilege of interviewing members who have played key roles in the success of the WSP.

I am looking forward to hearing their stories.

I suspect that, despite differences in generation, geography, personality, and professional background, a common thread will emerge.

They were involved.

They cared.

They contributed.

They showed up.

Those conversations will not only help us remember the history of the WSP. I hope they will also help us understand why the organization has endured and what each of us can do to help carry it forward.

In an Increasingly Digital World, Presence Still Matters

Today we have more ways than ever to communicate.

We can attend webinars, exchange emails, participate in social media, and connect with colleagues around the world almost instantly.

These tools are valuable, and they have greatly expanded our professional reach.

But I do not believe they have replaced the importance of being together.

There is still something unique about sitting across the table from another clinician.

There is something different about the conversation that takes place in the hallway after a lecture.

There is value in sharing a meal, discussing a challenging case, or meeting someone you have previously known only by name.

Professional organizations create the environment where those encounters can happen.

And sometimes the conversation you did not plan to have becomes the most important one of the meeting.

Showing Up Is an Investment

When we consider the benefits of membership in a professional organization, we naturally think about continuing education, scientific programs, and access to information.

Those benefits are important.

But there is another benefit that is more difficult to measure.

It is the opportunity to become part of a professional community.

That requires an investment of time.

Attend the meeting.

Introduce yourself.

Volunteer.

Join the conversation.

Sit with someone you do not know.

Speak with a resident.

Reconnect with an old colleague.

Offer to help.

You never know which conversation will lead to a friendship, which friendship will lead to an opportunity, or which small act of service will influence someone else's career.

As the Western Society of Periodontology approaches its 75th anniversary, it is worth remembering that its future will be built in much the same way as its past.

One member at a time.

One conversation at a time.

One act of service at a time.

After nearly five decades of involvement with the Western Society of Periodontology, I can look back and see that many of the most meaningful experiences of my professional life began in remarkably simple ways.

I went to the meeting.

I joined the conversation.

I tried to help.

I showed up.

And perhaps that is one of the greatest benefits of membership of all.

Showing up matters.

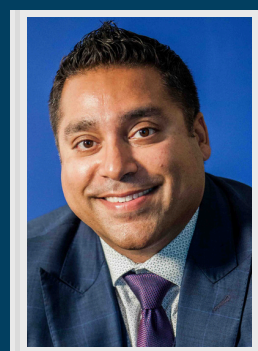
Thomas J. Kepic, DDS MSD
Editor, *The Gum Line*
Western Society of Periodontology



CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF THE WSP: A NEW ERA FOR OUR ANNUAL SESSION

Dear Members and Colleagues,

It is an exciting time for the Western Society of Periodontology, and I am thrilled to share a preview of what we are planning for our upcoming 75th Anniversary Annual Session!



Dr. Bobby Birdi
WSP Annual Session Chair

For 75 years, WSP has brought together an exceptional community of periodontists, restorative dentists, dental hygienists, researchers, educators, and other dental professionals who share a commitment to advancing our profession and improving patient care. This milestone is an opportunity to celebrate that remarkable history while looking ahead to the future of periodontal and restorative dentistry.

As Annual Session Chair, my goal is to help usher in a new era of WSP Annual Sessions—one that builds on the educational excellence and collegial atmosphere our members have come to expect, while introducing fresh ideas and new ways to learn, connect, and challenge ourselves.

This year, we are working to create a meeting that is dynamic, interactive, and genuinely engaging. Alongside outstanding educational presentations, we are developing new formats that encourage participation and meaningful discussion. From thought-provoking panel discussions and interactive clinical case battles to collaborative treatment-planning sessions and practical, hands-on learning opportunities, we want our attendees to leave with more than notes from a lecture. We want you to leave with new perspectives, practical ideas you can incorporate into your practice, and renewed enthusiasm for what we do every day.

One of the things that makes WSP special is the opportunity to learn from colleagues across different disciplines and generations of clinicians. Whether you are an experienced specialist, a restorative dentist, a dental hygienist, an educator, or a resident beginning your professional journey, there will be opportunities to share experiences, exchange ideas, and learn from one another. I am particularly excited about creating more opportunities for open discussion, friendly competition, and the kind of honest clinical conversations that make us better clinicians.

Of course, an annual session is about more than education. It is also about the relationships, friendships, and shared experiences that bring our WSP community together. We plan to continue our popular Friday afternoon pool party, giving everyone a chance to unwind, reconnect with old friends, and meet new colleagues in a relaxed setting. We are also planning a special Saturday evening celebration to mark this incredible 75-year milestone. It will be an opportunity to recognize the people who have helped shape WSP, celebrate how far we have come, and look forward to the next chapter of our society.

Reaching 75 years is a tremendous accomplishment, and it would not be possible without the dedication of our past leaders, members, speakers, volunteers, and industry partners. Their contributions have helped build the organization we are fortunate to be part of today. As we celebrate this anniversary, I hope we can honour that legacy while continuing to push ourselves to make each annual session even more valuable, relevant, and enjoyable.

Our Annual Session Committee is working hard to make this anniversary meeting something truly memorable. We are excited about the ideas taking shape and look forward to sharing more details as the program develops.

I encourage you to join us, bring your colleagues, reconnect with friends, and be part of this special celebration. Whether your favourite part of the meeting is the science, the clinical discussions, the social events, or simply catching up with people who share your passion for dentistry, I am confident there will be something to make this year's session special for you.

Seventy-five years is a remarkable milestone, but I believe the best years of WSP are still ahead of us. I look forward to celebrating this achievement with all of you and helping shape an exciting future for our society.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Bobby Birdi
WSP Annual Session Chair



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