

Historians Par Excellence



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Once upon a time, the history of dentistry and the dental profession was an integral part of every dental curriculum.

In many instances, such a course was 15 or more hours in length and occupied a semester during the freshman year.

Our purpose here is not to debate the void we feel exists as fewer young dentists have experienced the opportunity to spend time during their curriculum to review some of the significant events that have helped to shape the dental profession. However, we have been extended a brief opportunity this month to gain insight into the accomplishments of a few individuals who have had a significant impact on this profession.

This "opportunity" comes to us compliments of two very fine dental historians whose contributions have graced the pages of this journal before. Malvin Ring and Clifton Dummett have each contributed a great deal to the understanding of the history of our profession as a result of their untiring efforts to provide interesting and thought-provoking accounts of individuals who have played an important role in the development of the profession. Among the many outstanding contributions to the literature by Dr. Ring was his well-illustrated text entitled, *Dentistry: An Illustrated History*. Dr. Dummett has published many texts of note including *The Hillenbrand Era* and a history of his alma mater, Northwestern University. We have always considered

it an honor to receive their contributions to this publication and it is with pride we present their most recent articles to the readership.

As he has done in some previous contributions, Malvin Ring researches and finds what to most of us is probably a little known and on the surface seemingly insignificant fact or person. When his book was published in the year 1521, Niccolo Tomeo, a Renaissance scholar, may have had only a remote connection to the development of dentistry. However, we found Ring's description of how Tomeo illustrated the fourth of Aristotle's rules of motion fascinating, to say the least.

Clifton Dummett on the other hand, does what he always does so well. He offers his insights into individuals and events that have influenced the development of the dental profession in the United States. Without asking him, we suspect that most, if not all of the Callahan Award honorees that Dr. Dummett profiles in his article, were personally known to him, making his comments particularly insightful.

These two dental authors are special. We thank them for keeping our link to dentistry's history alive. That is most important as dentistry is propelled with even greater speed into the changes and modifications it will experience in the 21st century.

And to Dr. Dummett, our colleague and past president of the Los Angeles Dental Society, who is the 2003 recipient of the Callahan Award, we extend our heartiest of congratulations! **CDA**