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Massachusetts-Based Lab Celebrates 50 Years

By Kim Molinaro, Managing Editor

When Myron Dickerman founded Dickerman Dental Prosthetics as a one-man C&B lab in Sharon, MA in 1965, he was baking acrylic to gold frameworks, fabricating copper-plated dies and soldering with an open flame.

Over the last half century, the lab has grown to 28 employees, added a removable/implant department and embraced new materials and processes. Yet one thing has remained the same: at age 83, Myron still comes to the laboratory every day—waxing IPS e.max crowns and doing diagnostic waxups—typically putting in six or more hours at the bench.

“I enjoy making things and this field is second nature to me,” says Myron. “In all these years, I’ve never once woken up in the morning dreading going to work. I love what I do.”

His passion is contagious: three generations of Dickermans are involved in the family business. Myron’s wife, Laura, does the books; his son, Ira, is President and oversees operations; his daughter, Sara, works in the ceramics and CAD/CAM departments; and his grandson, Brandon, works in the implant department. “It’s a really special thing because not everybody gets to spend as much time with their family as we do,” says Ira. “It’s not unusual in our industry to have a family business, but it’s unusual that it works as well as it does for us.”

Ira says another ingredient in the lab’s success

is the longevity of its staff: nine of its 28 technicians have served in the lab for at least 28 years, and another six have been there at least 10 years.

In addition to a hard-to-beat four-day workweek, 32-year-veteran George Mergner, CDT, says the loyalty of the staff comes from a combination of factors. “We’re a real team here and Ira leads by example. He doesn’t stop at quitting time and he’s in the trenches with us everyday,” says Mergner, Partial Denture Manager. “Plus, we work in a state-of-the-art facility and the lab invests in new equipment and stays on top of industry changes which keeps us interested and challenged.”

Early Adoption Pays Off

Being an early adopter of new techniques has helped the lab make a name for itself. For instance, a major turning point in the lab’s growth came in 1984 when it got on board with implants. In fact, Ira was involved in fabricating the first Brånemark Hybrid Prosthesis restoration in New England.

Following that case, Ira became passionate about the specialty and began seeking out as much education as he could. Through various courses and programs, he worked alongside dentists and, as his experience grew, he switched roles from trainee to trainer, teaching dentists impression

and abutment selection techniques chairside and running courses alongside implant surgeons.

Today, implants represent 40% of the lab’s total sales and now a new-generation Dickerman, Brandon, is leading the lab into the digital implant era. After learning Straumann’s coDiagnostiX guided surgery system, he implemented a new digital process for fabricating surgical guides in the lab. In fact, he became so proficient with the software that, like Ira, he now works as a part-time consultant for Straumann, training technicians and dentists across the country and going chairside to assist with immediate-load conversion cases.

So with high-tech implant capabilities, multiple milling machines and scanners, and iPads at every bench, what does the laboratory patriarch think about all of the lab’s new gadgets? “My father embraces them,” says Ira. “In fact, we got our first scanner and mill while he was away on vacation and the first thing he said when he got back was, ‘I want to learn how to scan and design,’ and he did!” **LMT**



Myron Dickerman graduated from dental technology school in 1956, worked for a prominent prosthodontist in Boston for nine years and then opened Dickerman Dental Prosthetics in 1965. Here, Myron (on left) was featured on the cover of the November 1974 issue of *Dental Laboratory Review* when he was serving as the President of the Dental Laboratory Association of Massachusetts.



Above: The lab staff members and their families celebrated the lab’s golden anniversary in September with a buffet dinner, open bar and entertainment by a magician. The Dickermans pictured are: Brandon and Ira (far left); Laura (center in the brightly colored top); and Myron and Sara directly behind her.

At right: Five of the lab’s technicians recently received their CDT certification, bringing the lab’s total CDT count to 10. From l. to r.: David Wilson, Dentures; Jay Nagle, Crown and Bridge; Brandon Dickerman, Dentures; Jim Angele, Crown and Bridge; and Mark Teixeira, Dentures.

