

Women On The Rise In Dentistry

By Henry Duvall
Amid the relaxing music, dental care literature and the whir of high powered drills, change is under way in the nation's dental offices. A growing number of women are becoming dentists in a traditionally male-dominated profession.

In 1977, 1,900 of the 117,890 dentists in the country, or nearly two per cent, were women, according to American Dental Association data. Today, the number of female dentists is substantially rising because of an upsurge in female enrollment in dental schools.

ADA statistics for 1981-82 show there are 4,227 women enrolled in the 60 dental schools in the United States, constituting 18.7 per cent of the overall enrollment of 22,621. In the preceding year, women accounted for 17 per cent of dental school enrollment.

Dr. Jeanne C. Sinkford, dean of the Howard University College of Dentistry in Washington, D.C., remembers when female enrollment was 1.2 per cent in the 1950s when she entered dental school. "Most U.S. dental schools at the time had no women at all," she recalls.

Dr. Sinkford represents the strides women have made in dentistry. She is believed to be the first female dean of a dental school in the nation.

Howard University's dental school has a higher percentage of women students than any other dental school in the United States. Based on 1981-82 ADA statistics on the number of women in dental schools, Howard has a female enrollment of 32 per cent, followed by the University of Pennsylvania with 23.6 per cent and New York

University with 19 per cent.

Howard also has the highest number for any single dental school of black Americans enrolled in dentistry — 289 students in 1981-82. Blacks constitute 4.5 per cent of the total enrollment in the nation's dental schools.

The women's liberation movement helped to open doors for women in dentistry. Concurrently, more funds became available for all students including women and admission practices were "liberalized" in the '70s, says Dr. Sinkford.

One major obstacle which until recently confronted students seeking to enter dental schools was the "carving test," which examined visual motor skills. This manual test, which involved carving an object to scale, was intended to analyze whether a prospective dental student could perceive objects in different dimensions, working with the hands and mind.

Dr. Sinkford notes that most women were at a disadvantage in this test because men were traditionally exposed to "shop skills." The carving test, however, was superseded in 1973 by the Perceptual Motor Ability Test (PMAT), which is part of the Dental Admission Test. Dr. Sinkford stresses that this mechanism is a more equitable way of predicting visual motor aptitude.

The first female dentist in the United States was Lucy Hobbs-Taylor, who graduated from Ohio College of Dental Surgery in 1866.

Dr. Sinkford points out that Howard graduated a woman, Mary Wooten, in the dental school's first class in 1883. "Howard has traditionally been one of the few U.S. dental schools to admit women on an equal basis as men," she emphasizes.

In 1949, New York philanthropist and dentist Louise C. Ball bequeathed a half-million dollars to Howard's dental school to improve the quality instruction. Dr. Sinkford was one of the recipients of a Ball fellowship for postdoctoral dental studies. "This unique fellowship made it possible to pay for my tuition, books



DR. JEANNE SINKFORD, dean of the Howard University College of Dentistry, instructs a dental student on the care of a young patient. Dr. Sinkford is believed to be the first female dean of a dental school in the nation.

and instruments," she says.

Four-year scholarships also have been established from the Ball fund and awarded to gifted female students.

After graduating the first in her class from Howard's dental school in 1958 at the age of 24, Dr. Sinkford went on to earn a Ph.D. in physiology at Northwestern University and continued postgraduate studies in residency training in pedodontics at the Children's Hospital National Medical Center in Washington.

The Washington native and mother of three children has been an educator, researcher, practitioner and administrator at Howard. She was named dean of the Howard College of Dentistry in 1975 — the

International Year of the Woman.

Dr. Sinkford has been actively recruiting women for careers in dentistry since the '60s. "The women we are recruiting are very qualified," she says. "Their aptitude test scores and predoctoral grade point averages are equal to those of the male students that we accept."

One student in the Howard dental school, encouraged by a female dentist regarding dentistry, is Rometta Powell, a 22-year-old junior and native of Atlanta. When Ms. Powell completes dental school, she intends to work with the dentist who has offered her career opportunities and guidance.

Howard University this year graduated its first woman in its oral surgery program, Dr. Renee McCoy-Collins. Women continue to be underrepresented in the specialty areas of den-

istry. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported to Congress in 1980 that there are only six female oral surgeons in the country. "Dean Sinkford has been quite an inspiration," Dr. McCoy-Collins emphasizes. "The dean has been a perfect example of women's ability in dentistry."

C.A. Gooch Completes Recruit Training

Navy Seaman Clarence A. Gooch, son of Mrs. Louise and Clarence Gooch, Jr. of Kithwood Drive, Durham, has completed recruit training at the Naval Training Center, Orlando, Fla.

During the eight-week training cycle, trainees studied general military subjects designed to prepare them for further

academic and on-the-job training in one of the Navy's 85 basic occupational fields. Included in their studies were seamanship, close order drill, Naval history and first aid. Personnel who complete this course of instruction are eligible for three hours of college credit in Physical Education and Hygiene.

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Foot Notes

Q.: What is an ingrown toenail and what are some of the common causes?

A.: This is a condition in which the free edge of the nail has penetrated and become embedded in the surrounding soft tissue. Among the most common causes of this condition is improper trimming of the nail. Toenails should not be trimmed like fingernails in that they should be cut straight across where both nail margins are visible. If the corner of the nail is visible, it has less of a tendency to become ingrown and subsequently infected.

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A&T Dean On Egyptian Study Tour

GREENSBORO
Dr. Suresh Chandra, dean of the School of Engineering at A&T State University, has been selected as one of a ten-member group of distinguished American educators spending two weeks on a fact finding tour of Egypt.

The team, headed by Dr. Frederick Humphries, president of Tennessee State University, will explore the possibility of historically black universities developing a linkage with developing universities in Egypt. The trip is being made possible by Egypt and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Chandra is the only member of the team representing an engineering discipline.

The team of educators will explore the possibilities of such ventures with the Egyptians as joint research, faculty exchanges, advisory roles, joint seminars, workshops and conferences, and graduate study for Egyptians in the United States.

Chandra said the Egyptians have set aside \$2.5 million to insure that the historically black colleges can be involved in linkage with the Egyptian universities. Chandra will be in Egypt from October 20 to November 3.

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4100 Five Oaks—Condominium. New Listing—3 BR, LR, DR, kitchen w/breakfast area, 2 1/2 baths, and rock garden. Call for appointment. \$74,500.

902 Cook Rd—Great starter home. 3 BR, LR, kitchen, very spacious \$37,000.

1404 Rosewood Ave.—4 BR, 2 bath, LR, kitchen, loan assumption w/low monthly payments. \$46,900.

2213 Wintergreen—GREAT LOAN ASSUMPTION. This 3 BR rancher can be yours with only \$12,250 down & assume 10% loan w/mortgage payments of only \$335 \$38,250.

610 Dunbar St.—Lovely older home with lots of potential. 3 BR, 1 bath, LR, DR, on large lot. Good loan assumption. \$5250 down payment. \$392.97 mo. payment.

NCCU Area—820 Ridgeway—2 BR frame rancher. \$26,500.

Huntersville Rd. (Massey Chapel Rd.)—S. Durham. Only a few minutes from Chapel Hill & RTP. 3 BR, den, \$45,500.

306 Omega Rd. (River Forest)—Recently redone brick rancher in quiet neighborhood. 3 BR, 1 1/2 bath. Must see to appreciate. \$41,900.

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