

Jedi Dentistry



I have just returned from the Mid-Winter meetings in Chicago where I attended the Academy of Operative Dentistry meeting along with the board meetings of both the Gold Foil and Tucker Academies. It dawned on me that the members of these academies are the elite of dentistry; they believe in and practice excellence in dentistry. They are Jedi Dentists.

Just as the Jedi warriors in *Star Wars* were admired throughout the galaxy, these dentists are recognized and respected for their abilities and dedication to excellence in dentistry.

Some believe that the standards of dental education today are declining. Gold Foil is hardly taught at

any of our dental schools and gold castings are becoming less popular. Reasons for this decline include a lack of qualified instructors to teach these restorations and their inability to educate patients to choose gold.

After joining the Tucker Academy and being mentored by Dr. Richard V. Tucker and Dr. Warren Johnson for a number of years, I decided to return to teaching part-time. I applied at the Restorative Department at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. When I met with the chairman of the department, I told him that I wanted to teach gold. He chuckled at me and said that they didn't do much gold work there. I said, "I know. That's why I'm here." That was more than five years ago. Today, Penn has embraced the Tucker Technique and we now do a number of gold restorations at the school. I tell my students "When you do an excellent restoration it's like hitting a home run. It's a lot of fun."

The moral of this story is that one person can make a difference. If the state of dental education is to improve, it is up to us to start it. We are the Jedi Dentists. We must lead! We know what excellence looks like and how to achieve it. We must teach the younger faculty and students how to achieve excellence in restorative dentistry and to enjoy the practice of their craft.

I implore the members of these academies to join the faculty at a nearby dental school and bring your considerable talents to the fight for excellence in dentistry.

May the force be with you.

Joseph F Newell, DDS
President,
American Academy of Gold Foil Operators