

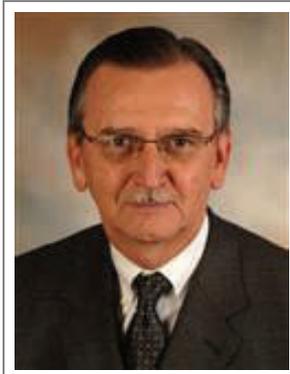
Courtesy of Dr. Rick Orrick

# Healey's Comments

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY—ENDODONTIC ALUMNI

August 01, 2009  
Volume 1, Issue 2

## Featured Article: Dr. Kenneth J. Spolnik is Chair of Endodontics Mychel M. Vail



at Indiana University School of Dentistry. Dr. Spolnik's academic background includes obtaining his BS degree at Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, his DDS in 1975 at IUSD, GPR at the Veteran's Administration Hospital, and his MSD and certificate in Endodontics in 1978 at IUSD. Dr. Spolnik obtained Diplomate status in 1984.

When asked why he decided to become a full-time educator, Dr. Spolnik said, "Timing - there was an opportunity, and there was a need." He truly enjoyed private practice, but he was ready for a change. Beverly, his wife, is excited for his new endeavors.

They have a daughter, Stacy, who is finishing her last year in radiology residency, David, their son-in-law, is finishing his last year in anesthesia residency, and their son, Mark who is 25 years old, is enjoying his summer.

The value that he brings to our program is immeasurable. The life he has lived and the people he has mentored, both professionally and personally, have perfectly prepared him for this position. We are inspired by his vision and his goal of making it one of the best programs in the country. We encourage continued support from our friends and colleagues in the endodontic community and wish Dr. Spolnik the very best.

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**"Timing- there was an opportunity, and there was a need."**

**Kenneth J. Spolnik**

After 31 years in private practice with Indianapolis Endodontics and 31 years as a part-time professor at IUSD, Dr. Kenneth J. Spolnik has accepted the position of Chair of Endodontics

### My Vision for Our Endodontic Program

Kenneth J. Spolnik

Hello Everyone! I feel so privileged to be the next Chairman of our Endodontic Department! I want to thank all who have called and sent notes to congratulate me on this new chapter in my life. I am humbled and excited to be able to make a difference in both the lives and careers of our students. I feel the past 31 years as a clinical endodontist and part-time educator have prepared me well to take on this new position.

I could not and would not take this job if it was not for the help of Joe Legan (Pre-doctoral Director) and Mychel Vail (Acting Chairman). They are dedicated educa-

tors and talented clinicians. I look forward to working with them to make the IUSD Endodontic Department the best in the world.

My vision for the department encompasses these 10 areas:

**Faculty** I feel strongly we need four full-time faculty; the Chairman, Pre-doctoral Director, Program Director, and Research Director.

**Facility** Our hope is that we will see a new dental school in 5-7 years; however, our economic times may postpone that timeline. If that occurs, I would like to renovate the Graduate Clinic which was not designed to

accommodate microscopes, ASI carts, digital radiographic equipment, etc. So stay tuned...

**Resource** I see IUSD and specifically the Endodontic Department as a resource for the dental community regarding new materials, new equipment, and new techniques. This could, perhaps, be achieved by periodic C.E. courses.

#### **Emergency Service**

I would like to set up an emergency service where a graduate student would be assigned to a designated chair in our department every afternoon. He/she will be responsible to see the

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## My Vision of Our Endodontic Program cont.

Kenneth J. Spolnik

emergency patients that present to the school that day. I feel this will benefit both the graduate students and the school.

### National Recognition

Our department needs more visibility on a national level. We will have more graduate student presentations at AAE meetings, as well as publications by both faculty and graduate students.

### Research

We need to develop a focused area of research as well as more collaborative projects with other departments in the school. Our new Research Director will help coordinate this activity and, perhaps, get grant money for the department.

### Pediatric Endodontic Exposure

We will rotate graduate students through Riley Hospital to increase their exposure to the treatment and management of pediatric patients. We hope to start our own

registry on "Regenerative Endodontic" cases.

### Board Certification

We will encourage and prepare our graduate students to successfully complete the process for "Board Certification." The ABE has made significant changes to facilitate this process by allowing students to take the written examination during their second year of training. Under the new rules, candidates can complete the certification process within a year after graduation, if they desire.

### Practice Management

A course in Endodontic Practice Management will be added into the graduate curriculum. This will include presentations by an accountant, attorney, banker, dental insurance representative, dental supply company, certified financial planner, and a dental management consultant. Hopefully, we can better prepare our graduates to enter the world of private

### Productivity

Our main goal in the Graduate Department is to train our students to be excellent endodontists. However, we can improve on their productivity by appropriate scheduling, the emergency service, and adequate staff. IUSD is experiencing budgetary cutbacks as a result of decreased state funding. By increasing our department productivity, we can help provide additional income for the school.

These are the areas I would like to address as Chairman of the Endodontic Department. We (full-time faculty) cannot do this ourselves. We need the help of our part-time faculty who contribute so much to our program, as well as financial contributions of our alumni. Without your financial help, we could not provide the quality of graduate education students expect from our program. Please contact me by phone, email, or snail mail if you have any suggestions or comments.



Dr. Spolnik with his family— Beverly, Mark, Stacy, and David

## Featured Staff - Elaine May

Dianne Heid



Elaine May

Elaine received her dental assisting certificate through Regional Occupational Program (ROP) in Orange County, California. Prior to joining the Endodontic Department, Elaine worked in the IU Pediatric Clinic for 3 1/2 years including 1 1/2 years with the pediatric residents involving sedation cases.

Dr. Cecil Brown offered her a dental assistant position and her endodontic journey began. Elaine was "warned" by several of her peers that endodontics would be boring...boring...and then more boring; however, she is

grateful that she did not heed the warning. Dr. Brown then promoted her as clinic coordinator of Graduate Endodontics. He was Elaine's support system through thick and thin and always listened with an open ear.

On a personal note, Elaine has five children and six grandchildren ranging from one to twelve years of age. She and her husband, Tom, live on ten acres in the middle of farmland. They have canoed the boundary waters in Minnesota several times and fish for northern pike and walleye in Lake of the

Woods, Canada, and fly fish in Michigan and Idaho. She loves to read mysteries and has been a "Young and the Restless" fan from the first day the soap began on TV.

Elaine has enjoyed the world of working in the small universe of MB-2's, C-shaped canals, surgeries, and now regenerative repair. She is essential to our residents having a full schedule and keeping them busy. Elaine has been with us for 8 years and we truly consider her an asset to our department. Thanks Elaine!!!

## Greetings from the American Dental Association

Charles L. Steffel

*Serving as Trustee of the American Dental Association I have seen firsthand how the condition of dentistry in general affects our specialty of endodontics. The health of general practice dentistry has a direct effect on the health of our practices. In other words, when they are busy, we are busy. And when the pressures of this economic downturn, the effects of reductions in insurance reimbursements, the indebtedness of new graduates, and intrusions into dental practices by government at all levels have negative effects on general practices, we endodontists feel their pain.*

*The bad news is, we are facing the most difficult economic times of our lives. The good news is, these times are not that bad. And when the economy recovers, the future looks bright for the profession.*

*The ADA is an organization*

*of over 157,000 member dentists. We represent 72% of all dentists. The annual budget of the ADA is nearly 118 million dollars. But in order to present our House of Delegates with a balanced budget this year, the Board of Trustees had to cut over six and a half million dollars of expenses. That will leave us with precious few resources to meet the challenges facing us next year.*

*Challenges such as health-care reform legislation in Congress. Unlike medicine, dentistry provides Americans the world's best oral health in an efficient and cost-effective manner. We have to be certain that dentistry is not swept up in the tidal wave of reform that is coming to medicine. We are different, and we have to show our lawmakers that American dentistry works.*

*One of the most important challenges we are facing is the crisis in dental education.*

*The American Association of Endodontists Foundation and the IUSD Foundation are partners with the ADA in a new program – Our Legacy, Our Future. Your contributions to the AAE and IUSD are part of this overall, nationwide campaign to address dental education.*

*Another topic of discussion is licensure examinations. The ADA is committed to moving toward one national examination, accepted by all state boards, which would be integrated into the dental school curriculum. We desire the elimination of human subjects if the exam is administered outside the required treatment plan of the candidate's dental school patients.*

*The ADA continues to battle unfair insurance practices, and will be seeking legislation to repeal a portion of the McCarran-Ferguson Act that gives the insurance industry a limited exemption from anti-trust laws.*

*The law that forbids dentists from sharing information and acting in collusion with each other concerning fees and other business practices does not apply to the insurance industry. Repeal of this law could help level the playing field in our dealings with the insurance industry.*

*The ADA has just hired its new Executive Director, Dr. Kathleen O'Loughlin. She is a dentist with 20 years experience in both private practice and public health. She has been involved in dental education and, for ten years, was the CEO of a major dental insurance company. She comes to the ADA with a complete set of skills to help us meet these challenges. I am certain we chose an outstanding executive.*

*The American Dental Association, your ADA, is ready to meet the needs of the profession, both now and in the future. I am proud to serve you and our profession.*

## Spotlight on the Alumni - Class of 1985

Dianne Heid

**Dr. James "Jay" R. Higgins** was on active duty with the US Air Force during his training at IU. Upon graduation, Jay returned to the Air Force and served as staff endodontist at bases in North Carolina, the United Kingdom, and California. Jay became Board Certified in 1989. In 1995, he retired from the Air Force with the rank of Colonel and entered private practice with Dr. John Slavens in Indianapolis. Since 1995, Jay has been a part-time faculty member in the Endodontic Department at IUSD. He states teaching is his way of showing his gratitude for the

many opportunities his endodontic training has provided. Jay and his wife, Aileen, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on May 19th. They have three children. The youngest is a college sophomore at IU Tech in Bloomington. Jay plans to reduce his time in practice this year and devote more time to having fun and relaxing, yet continue teaching at IUSD.

**Dr. Denny Zent** graduated from the IU Endodontic program in 1985. As a married student to Wendy since 1970, father of two, Karen and David 11 & 8 yrs old back then, and an Air

Force Officer, going to school was the simplest part of his day. He currently practices in Fort Wayne in a group practice with three exceptional endodontists, Drs. James Fisher, Tom Oldag, and Ned Warner.

Upon separating from the US Air Force in 1989, Dr. Zent returned to his home town of Fort Wayne. He and his wife have been active in the dental society, serving in all the local society officer positions, with Wendy serving as state alliance president and on an ADA board as the alliance representative to ADPAC (American



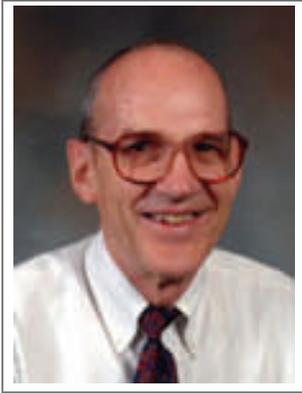
Dr. Jay Higgins      Dr. Denny Zent

Dental Political Action Committee). He currently serves on the ADPAC Board representing the 7th District (Indiana-Ohio) as Treasurer.

They recently built their retirement home on Lake James in Angola (Wendy's home town) and truly enjoy it.

## Pre-doctoral Program Update

Joseph J. Legan



Joseph J. Legan  
Pre-doctoral Director



"We're digital now, and I can evaluate students better through the consultation area"

The Pre-doctoral Endodontic Program at IUSD is alive and well. There have been many changes and improvements over the last 20 years. The biggest and most important change is the Pre-doctoral Endodontic Clinic renovation completed last fall, which included six operatories each with its own x-ray head and computer using the Schick system for digital x-ray.

Indiana now accepts the North Eastern Regional Board for licensure. The seniors were prepared for the NERB with a PowerPoint presentation and handout followed by a hands-on practice session with individual self assessment and constructive feedback. Seventy-six seniors took the NERB exam with only two endodontic failures.

The following three intramural courses are offered to the dental students during their senior year:

### Bleaching

The course consists of a PowerPoint presentation with a handout describing the causes of the tooth discoloration and the various bleaching systems that are available. This is followed by instruction at chairside.

### Periapical Surgery

A PowerPoint presentation with a handout on indications and steps in periapical surgery followed by a student assist to a resident performing periapical surgery.

### Advanced Endodontic Rotary Instrumentation

A PowerPoint presentation with a handout on Endodontic Rotary Instrumentation followed by a 4-hour hands on laboratory utilizing endodontic rotary instrumentation and obturation on an anatomic tooth model and two mounted extracted teeth.

### AAE Risk Assessment Form

The students are required to complete a Risk Assessment Form when seeking approval to start an endodontic case. This teaches the student which cases are in his capability and which should be referred.

We recruit our Endodontic Graduates and others in the area to teach in our Pre-doctoral Endodontic Clinic. We are fortunate to have over ten part-time endodontists. This enables us to maintain two faculty members in our clinic giving us a 3 to 1 ratio for effective teaching. The students consider the Endodontic Clinic as student friendly with helpful and caring faculty and staff who want the students to learn pulpal and periapical diagnosis and basic endodontic technique to treat uncomplicated endodontic cases to carry that into private practice.

## News and Notes

### Endodontic Renovation

- Graduate Endodontics Office area gets new carpet and painting after 20 years!

### 2008 Practice Moves

- Paul J. Ley joined Ken Spolnik, Bill Adams, Carl Newton, Kevin Dear-dorf, David Pfothenauer, and Ben Adams at Indianapolis Endodontics, located in Indianapolis, IN.
- Shane R. Christensen joined Dave Holtzmann, Garo Chalian, and Demetrios Syrpes at Endodontis of Colorado, located in Parker, CO

### Faculty Search

- Position open for full-time clinical faculty member. Call Mychel Vail, Chair of the Search and Screen Committee, if interested: 317-274-5329.
- AAE offers \$100,000 grant if you have practiced 10 years or less.

### IUSD Website

- Donor Honor Roll added—Thank you for all your contributions.
- Case Reports and Thesis Abstracts added.

**We are on the Web!**

[www.iusd.iupui.edu/dept/endo](http://www.iusd.iupui.edu/dept/endo)



# Residents - Class of 2010

Charles F. Hine

July always marks a new beginning in the lives of our residents. We just said good-bye to two great endodontists and welcomed three new residents to the program. We are truly blessed to have a consistently good group of residents in the Grad Endo Program. Our current second year residents are no exception. They have different backgrounds and histories, but they work together very well and have helped each other on the way to becoming excellent clinicians.

Jason Barney received his DDS from Ohio State and practiced general dentistry in Grand Junction, CO for three years. He has not yet decided where he will practice endodontics. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Kellie, and their three children. Jason is also an avid runner, which serves him well, as he spends a lot of time running between Little League games and gymnastics.

Steve Binkley hails from Kentucky. He was a football player at Vanderbilt, attended the University of Louisville School of Dentistry, and then served our

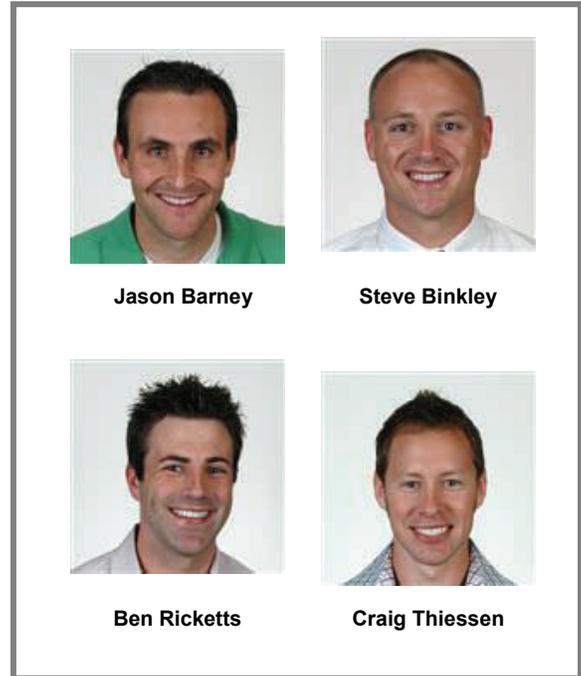
country in the Naval Dental Corps., spending most of his time at Parris Island, SC. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Angela, their son, Jackson, and golf. Steve plans to return to Kentucky to practice endodontics.

Ben Ricketts is a native Hoosier growing up in Mt. Vernon, IN. He attended Indiana University for both his undergraduate and dental degrees. After a one year GPR at the University of Texas Health Science Center, Ben returned to Indianapolis for his endodontic training. He is our VA resident. Ben enjoys tennis, skiing, running, and scuba diving. After his residency, he plans to open a practice in Colorado near his brother.

Craig Thiessen comes to us from Wausau, WI. He received a Bachelors of Science from St. Cloud State in Minnesota, his DDS at IUSD, and spent three years practicing general dentistry in Wausau. He enjoys waterskiing, golf, and sport shooting. Craig plans to return to Wausau to practice endodontics.

All of these residents have proven to be excellent in both

the didactic and clinical aspects of the residency. As stated earlier, endodontists trained at IU continue to be of the highest caliber. Please join me in welcoming them into the specialty.



Jason Barney

Steve Binkley

Ben Ricketts

Craig Thiessen



Residents hard at work in the OR, VA, and in the Endodontic Clinic



Drs. Thiessen, Ricketts, Binkley, and Barney at the 2009 Graduate Dinner. One more year guys!

# Harry Healey at the AAE Annual Meeting

David P. Pfothenauer



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Drs. Panietz, Arens, Yee, and DeNardo



Drs. Christiansen and family, Dr. Leddy and Roger



Drs. Pfothenauer and Norton



Drs. Legan, Brandys, and Meier



Drs. Miller and James



Dr. Deardorf and Dianne



Drs. Gideon and Risser

The IU Endodontic Alumni gathering was held this year on a pool-side patio at the fabulous Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center during the AAE Annual Session. Many of your classmates and colleagues were in attendance including Drs. Arens, Brandys, Christiansen, Deardorf, DeNardo, Gideon, James, Legan, Leddy, Meier, Miller, Newton, Norton, Panietz, Pfothenauer, Risser, Robinson, Spolnik, Todd, Vail, Woods, Yee, Zent, and, of course, our residents, Drs. Barney, Binkley, Christensen, Ley, Ricketts and Thiessen. It is always one of the highlights of the meeting to renew old acquaintances and relive some of the 'magic' of the days spent in residency.

This year's elected Harry Healey President is David Pfothenauer, Vice President is Elizabeth Miller and Secretary/Treasurer is Ken Spolnik. Next year's Harry Healey Reception will be held at the San Diego Convention Center on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Letters will be mailed to inform you of details for the gathering.

### AAE Foundation News

Your contributions to the AAE Foundation have really made a difference, especially in graduate education. Beginning last year, the foundation began contributing \$500 a year to each endodontic resident toward his or her research project. In addition to the fellowship awards for residents planning to go into full-time teaching,

there are \$100,000 grants now available to endodontists who have been in practice for fewer than 10 years and who would like to sign on to teach in one of the accredited programs for 5 years. If you have been considering a career in teaching now would be the time to take advantage of this lump-sum award. If you have not yet pledged to the foundation, please consider the impact your contributions will make. If you have already fulfilled your initial \$2000 Patron pledge, you can bless the foundation even further by considering being a Benefactor (\$5000), Founder (\$10,000) Diamond (\$25,000) or higher-level contributor. Your gifts are tax-deductible and you will have a tangible impact on the future of endodontic education.

### IAE Affiliate News

For those of you practicing in Indiana, the District IV Caucus provided a wealth of information regarding the benefits of membership at the state level. Currently the IAE holds no scheduled meetings. Annual affiliate dues are nominal and collected as part of your annual HJH membership. This fall we will be sending out a survey to all AAE members currently practicing in Indiana to see if there is interest in strengthening our ties with one another for the purposes of sharing information, affecting legislation, or accessing CE opportunities. We hope to get your input as to how we can serve you best. See you all at next year's meeting!



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Department of Endodontics

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