

THE HISTORY OF DLAT

The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas, as we know it today, had its beginning in 1944. The name of our organization at that time was the Dental Laboratory Guild of Texas.

There were earlier attempts to bring together the dental laboratory owners of Texas. In the mid-1930s, a small number of laboratory owners from Austin, San Antonio, and Houston gathered in Sholl Dental Laboratory in Houston. Although this group was well enough organized to apply for and receive a charter from the State of Texas, calling itself The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas, there was much controversy. Eventually, members disbanded in late 1939 or early 1940.

Recognition for advancement of the skills of our industry was still in the hearts and minds of Texas laboratory owners. In 1944, John T. Mays, Sr. wrote a letter to all the laboratories in the state, inviting them to attend a meeting in Houston to explore once again their desire to have a state association. This meeting was successful: another meeting was scheduled in Fort Worth at the Medcalf – Thomas Dental Laboratory and Supply House, which later became Patterson Dental Supply.

At this meeting, the first officers of our Association were elected: Ross R. Cone, President; John T. Mays, Vice-President; Harold Eiserloh, Secretary-Treasurer. Because the name The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas was still recorded at the State capitol, another name had to be chosen; the name Dental Laboratory Guild of Texas emerged. In 1968, the membership ordered the name change to The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas.

Membership became the number one priority of the fledgling group; every member was encouraged to invite others to join. Being accepted as a member of the Guild was time consuming; the application for membership was read at one meeting and not voted on until the next meeting. Although there was some controversy concerning the ideal size of the Guild, it did begin to grow.

Meetings were held on a semi-annual basis. A spirit of friendship and brotherhood began to develop in the young association as they resolved to undertake the problems that beset the industry. Much effort was directed toward assuring the dental profession that despite their suspicions, the Guild sought only to serve the profession. Other important goals of the Guild included acquiring new members, retaining membership, setting reasonable dues and collecting the same, attendance at meetings, and securing assistance for programs of the Guild's educational goals, as well as watching legislation.

The first Constitution of the Guild was written by Harold Stern with the able assistance of B. B. Moore. Much of the material was obtained from the Constitution of the Dental Laboratory Guild of Ohio.

The emblem of the Dental Laboratory Guild of Texas was originally designed by Harold J. Eiserloh. When the name was changed to The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas in 1968, this same emblem was modified to accommodate the new name.

Notes from the early 1950's show a feeling of cooperation between laboratories. Current issues of the day included legislation but also efficient business practices, internal conditions of a laboratory such as hiring practices, costs of production and other factors involved in making a just profit. It was realized that laboratory legislation was not a cure-all for the industry.

A significant action of the Dental Laboratory Guild of Texas occurred October 27, 1951. At this time, the membership unanimously voted to become affiliated with the National Association of Dental Laboratories. Since that time four members of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas have served as President of the NADL; Homer Fairhurst, CDT; Curt Wegman, CDT; Milton Pokladnik, CDT; and Lester Eisenbeck, CDT; and David Tietz, CDT has served as Treasurer. Many members of the association, too many to name here, have served on committees of the NADL.

Texas has always supported the National programs when possible. Two significant examples of this include the Certified Dental Technician program, CDT, and the Certified Dental Laboratory program, CDL. The CDT program has been recognized as a workable indicator of the quality of training and experience of dental technicians. The CDL program is a further effort to give the dentist an indication of the standards being met by the laboratories who participate in the voluntary program. In 1958, when the Certified Dental Technician and in 1977 when the Certified Dental Laboratory programs were introduced, Texas was quick to promote these issues.

Several Texans have played a significant role in defining and advancing these programs. Texans who have served as National Board of Certification Trustees are Roosevelt Davis, CDT, Danny Diebel, CDT, FNBC, Harry Diddie, CDT; Lester Eisenbeck, CDT, Gerry Mariacher, CDT, and Curt Wegman, CDT.

In the mid 1950s, there was new recognition for the laboratory industry. The Federal Trade Laws recognized the dental laboratory industry as a business entity (although this was later rescinded in 1977, by then it was not felt this would have much impact on the industry). Soon after, the Small Business Administration listed the industry as eligible for government loan assistance.

Another important development of the mid fifties included the hiring of the first Executive Secretary of the Organization. The first to serve in this position was Steve Ann Montgomery, who served from 1954–1964. Next to serve was Jim Presnal, who served from 1964 until he resigned in 1972 to focus on legislative and legal matters of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas. Letha Sparks took over at this time and served through 1979, when Priscilla Williams took this position. In 1984, Judy Salisbury began to serve and remained until 1997 when she turned the duties over to ASMI, an association management group headed by Joe McCullough. Joe served until June 2000 when Milton C. Pokladnik, CDT, became the new Executive Director.

In 1964, the Twentieth Anniversary of the Dental Laboratory Guild was observed in Fort Worth at the Texas Hotel. Highlights of this event included a banquet where past presidents and charter member laboratories were honored.

The Twenty-Fifth anniversary of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas was observed in 1969 at Dallas. The membership had nominated those especially deserving for Silver Anniversary Awards for outstanding service and contribution to The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas. Recipients were: Carmon Trippe, CDT; Alfred Stern, CDT; Fred Turbeville, CDT; Harold Stern, CDT; B.B. Moore, CDT; and Harold Eiserloh, CDT. Recipients of Silver Anniversary Awards for their friendship to the Association were J. D. Larkin, DDS; Crawford McMurry, DDS; and Bill Howard.

A 1973 newsletter shows an increase of 46 new members; this was attributed to the increase in legislative activity during this time.

Much of the efforts of the DLAT through the years have been directed toward legislation. The Guild adopted in 1967 a resolution supporting HB1025, which gave to the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners the power to adopt and enforce rules and regulations deemed necessary by the Board to govern relations between dental laboratories, technicians and dentists. The Board was required to give 10 days notice of any meeting called to consider the adoption of any rules or changes.

In April 1972, the Association adopted proposed legislation relating to this same issue:

1. A State Board to be created composed of three licensed practicing dentists, three licensed non-owner laboratory technicians, and three owners of licensed dental laboratories.
2. Powers to promulgate rules regarding sanitation, advertising and laboratory – dentist relationships as well as issue, suspend, and revoke licenses.
3. Enforcement to be by injunction, fine, jail, or license suspension or revocation.
4. The right of the individual to appeal to courts would be preserved.
5. Dentists who have technicians performing their own laboratory work were to be exempt.

In October 1972, the association was advised that the Texas Dental Association officers would only support legislation which recognized the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners as the primary governing Board; however, they would agree to a Supervisory Board of Dental Laboratory Owners/Technicians to be appointed by the Board of Dental Examiners. Association members voted to support this type of legislation provided the Advisory Board would have the authority to veto proposals of the State Board where dental laboratories and technicians were being regulated. The same veto power would be given to the State Board of Dental Examiners over proposals made by the Advisory Board. A compromise bill was drawn up by legal counsel for the Dental Association and the Dental Laboratory Association which provided for this concept of joint Board participation in all matters pertaining to dental laboratories and dental technicians.

A 1973 news release shows the Laboratory and Technician Registration Act to be in effect. Appointments to the Dental Laboratory Advisory Board were made by the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners in early October 1973. Those who served on the Advisory Board during 1973–1981 included Perry Anderson, CDT; David Bowen, CDT; Ernest Durham, CDT; Larry Fieldsmith, CDT; C.A. Goff, CDT; Lowell Parks, CDT; Kenneth Schmidt, CDT; Harold Stern, CDT and Curt Wegman, CDT.

Following public hearings and meetings of the two Boards, rules and regulations governing dental laboratories and technicians were adopted jointly in May 1975, and the rules were made public shortly thereafter. Late in 1975, revisions of the existing rules began to evolve and several questions arose concerning the methods to be followed by both Boards. Clarification was sought from the Attorney General as to the exact duties, responsibilities and functions of the Advisory Board in matters pertaining to the dental laboratories and technicians.

On March 5, 1976, the Attorney General ruled that The Board of Dental Examiners is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the Dental Laboratory Advisory Board, but may adopt, amend or reject them. Because this ruling did not reflect the original “legislative intent” of the statute, Association members mandated the Executive Committee of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas, or their designated appointees, to pursue all options available to repeal the statute, or to restore the original “legislative intent.”

On February 25, 1977, the Board of Dental Examiners repealed all existing rules and regulations pertaining to dental laboratories and dental technicians. The Association Legislative Committee was instructed to work with the Texas Dental Association Council and the Board of Dental Examiners to study recommended rules and regulations. The proposed amendment (SB 1125 and HB 1708) terminated the regulatory authority over the dental laboratories/technicians by the State Board of Dental Examiners and abolished the Dental Laboratory Advisory Board. This was essentially the same as the 1958 proposed act; all laboratory owners and managers and technicians were to register, illegal practice of dentistry by dental laboratories and technicians were clearly prohibited, advertising was restricted to members of the dental profession only; all work performed in a dental laboratory was to be pursuant to a prescription or work order from a licensed dentist.

Comprehensive revision to the Bylaws of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas was adopted in 1977. These were necessary because of the involvement of legal and governmental agencies into trade associations; the members felt a need for a code of ethics.

In March 1980, The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas agreed to propose to the Texas Sunset Commission that all dental laboratories and technicians would register annually with the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners for identification purposes only if the Texas Dental Association would support the repeal of the Advisory Board and the Regulations of the dental laboratory industry.

In April of 1981, a letter from then President Milton Pokladnik notified DLAT members that the Senate Bill No. 335, containing all the wording relating to our industry that we had been working for had been passed. In July 1982, a special legislative committee meeting was held to discuss issues such as getting a list of all commercial dental laboratories in the state and get them into compliance with the law. It was also suggested that a political action committee be formed.

In 1983, the Dental Laboratory Political Action Committee of Texas, to be known as Lab-Pac. was formed; the Constitution and Bylaws presented to and approved by the membership and Danny Diebel, CDT, the first chairman. The thrust of this Committee was not to campaign for legislation but to be organized and to have strength when needed. This Committee was to meet at least once a year.

In 1987, the Association was able to use the Sunset Provision to enter legislation that would establish a Dental Laboratory Certification Council. This Council would sit under the State Board of Dental Examiners and be composed of three Certified Dental Technicians. The Certification Act would require that in order to own or operate a dental laboratory that processed work for dentist licensed to practice in Texas; they must be a technician certified by the National Board of Certification of the National Association of Dental Laboratories or employ one. It became illegal for a dentist in Texas to use an unregistered Laboratory. Members who have served on the Certification Council are Gary V. Box, CDT; Roosevelt Davis, CDT, FNBC; Danny Diebel, CDT, FNBC; Harry “Jack” Diddie; Lester Eisenbeck, CDT; LeeRoy Marsden, CDT; and Milton C. Pokladnik, CDT.

In 1997, the Sunset Commission was to review the State Board of Dental Examiners and the Dental Practice Act. Due to several conflicts between organized dentistry, the hygienist and the legislature; the Dental Practice Act was allowed to sunset (die). Through the efforts of the Legislative Committee, especially Gary Morgan, CDT, and our Lawyer, Tim Von Dolen, we were able to keep the Certification Council in place under the new Dental Practice Act plus retain the “Grandfather” status of dental laboratories that were registered with the Board of Dental Examiners in 1987. They were also instrumental in getting the legislature to make provisions for dental students, who had graduated from dental school to take their Board Exams so that they would be able to practice. In emergency action, the legislature passed the new Dental Practice Act with many restrictions and demands on the Board. However the Certification remained untouched and gained great respect in the legislature.

An important part of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas is the Affiliate – Associate Membership. In 1964, the membership of the DLAT recognized the CDT program was going well and realized a need for a CDT to be able to be a part of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas. In the fall of 1964, the membership voted to admit all Certified Dental Technicians as Affiliates of DLAT.

In time, it was recognized that because of the five-year requirement for CDTs, there was no place for the bench technician to advance his knowledge and skills. Therefore, in 1978 the Association voted to admit as associate members those laboratory representatives, bench technicians and other individuals who were not CDTs or laboratory owners. Soon thereafter, Harold Johnson, CDT, was asked to serve as Liaison of the Affiliate-Associate organization. Since then Wendy Wagner, CDT, and Keith Wilson have served in that position.

The membership of The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas has always shown an interest in advancing education. There is currently a scholarship program in place to give at least two scholarships per year to worthy students. This fund was originally called the Robert E. Hankins Memorial Scholarship Fund, named to honor Mr. Hankins, who was instrumental in advancing the scholarship program. Since then the program has held the generic name of the Scholarship Fund and occasionally an individual will be named to the fund as in the case of the death of John Dunn, CDT, and Joe Suggs, CDT, whose family directed memorials to be directed to the Fund.

For the past several years the goal of the Association has been to establish the Spring Conference as a regional meeting promoting the advancement of dental laboratory education and fellowship of technicians with common goals and concerns. In order to achieve this goal the name was changed to The DFW Southwest Regional Conference and Expo. This 60th anniversary sees this meeting growing in quality and stature with over 30 clinicians and 60 exhibitors.

We continue to look forward and never back, except to honor those who made our Association a reality rather than a dream.

ADDENDUM

HONORARY, CHARTER, AND LIFE MEMBERS

Raymond E. Abel*	Homer Huddleston*	Fred Readel*
Tony A. Bauer*	Hal Johnson*	E. R. Reinhart*
Senator Chet Brooks	E.S. Kennedy*	Alfred Stern*
Hubert Bullock*	Homer H. Mathis*	Harold Stern*
L. D. Crane*	John T. Mays	Peter Stein
Athol Dickson*	Marshall McMurry*	Charles. M. Syracuse*
Harold J. Eiserloh*	Roy Montgomery*	Carmon Trippe*
Larry Fieldsmith	B. B. Moore*	Fred Turbeville*
Plez Foster*	Sam Plazzo*	Paul Utley*
Marlin Gross*	Z. C. Perry*	Tim Von Dohlen
Guenther Grothe	James H. Possoit*	Curt Wegman
Robert Hill	L. J. Ponder	

**Deceased*

PAST PRESIDENTS

2007 Robert Jones	1975 Stanley Beal
2006 Wendy K. Wagner	1974 Leonard Labe*
2005 Thomas J. Moore	1973 Earnest Durham*
2004 Daniel Burch	1972 Perry Anderson*
2003 Rick Barton	1971 Marshal McMurry*
2002 Matt Aven	1970 Francis R. Reed
2001 David Atherton	1969 Gunther Grothe
2000 Emery W. Burdine	1968 Ellis W. Morris
1999 Linda Dossing	1967 Paul Bullock*
1998 John Dunn*	1966 James R. Elliott*
1997 Tommy Cummins	1965 Homer Fairhurst*
1996 Randy Bauer	1964 W.C. "Dub" Laney*
1995 Gary Morgan	1963 Harry "Jack" Diddie*
1994 Jeff Singlar	1962 Bernie R. Branch*
1993 Norman Morris	1961 Curt Wegman
1992 Harry Abrams	1960 Alfred Stern*
1991 LeeRoy Marsden	1959 E. R. Rinehardt*
1990 Chris J. Hale	1958 L. J. Jackson*
1989 Wesley Salmans	1957 Harold Eisenloh*
1988 James V. Patterson	1956 J. H. Possiot*
1987 L. J. "Jake" Ponder	1955 Marlin Gross*
1986 Mark C. Wegman	1954 Carmon Trippe*
1985 Murry Daniels	1953 Norman Walker*
1984 Hazel Nelson*	1952 Clay Stevenson*
1983 Gary V. Box	1951 Homer Huddleston*
1982 Danny Diebel	1950 Bill Hines*
1981 Milton C. Pokladnik	1949 Fred Turbeville*
1980 Joe Suggs*	1948 Harold Stern*
1979 George Knudsen *	1947 B. B. Moore*
1978 Larry D. Fieldsend	1946 Harold Eisenloh*
1977 Jimmy L. Davis	1945 John T. Mays*
1976 Lester Eisenbeck	1944 Ross R. Cone*

** Deceased*

HALL OF FAME AWARD

In 1987, The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas Board of Directors voted to approve an award to honor the most distinguished and dedicated members of the Association. The first recipients were selected by the Board. After 2001 the recipient is selected by Hall of Fame Members.

In 2003, a ribbon was approved by the Board to be worn by the Hall of Fame member. It is comprised of four colors, red, blue, white and black. The colors represent the qualities of the award. Red represents their dedication to the association and the industry, white stands for their honorable character, blue stands for their love of the industry and respect for their fellow technicians, and black for the long hours and many nights given in service for their Association.

HALL OF FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS

2007	Gary V. Box
2005	Milton C. Pokladnik
2004	Ellis W. Morris
2003	Emery W. Burdine
2001	Francis R. Reed
1999	Danny Diebel
1994	Lester Eisenbeck
1991	Joe M. Suggs*
1989	Harold Stern*
1989	B. B. Moore*
1988	Curt Wegmann
1987	H. W. "Jack" Diddie*

Since 1944, members of the DLAT have had before them the goal of bringing together those dental laboratory owners and technicians who are directly involved in the industry in order to improve skills and advance recognition of the industry. Many people have given much of their time to accomplish this goal throughout the years. All Texas laboratories and technicians have received the direct benefits of this effort. As The Dental Laboratory Association of Texas looks to the future, this goal shall continue to guide us.