



# Endodontics News

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Enjoy the Adventure of Learning,  
says Thomas A. Montagnese, D.D.S., M.S.

In a city where going to the other side of town often seems like visiting a foreign land, the path of Thomas A. Montagnese, D.D.S., M.S., from his hometown of Lorain to the CWRU School of Dental Medicine involved more than simply driving across the Hope Memorial Bridge.

Dr. Montagnese, assistant clinical professor in the Graduate Endodontic Program, was born and raised in Lorain. He graduated from Clearview High School in 1966, did his pre dental studies at the University of Cincinnati from 1966 to 1969, and graduated from The Ohio State University College of Dentistry in 1973.

After graduating from dental school he served with the United States Navy Dental Corps as a lieutenant at Subic Bay Naval Station, Republic of the Philippines, from 1973 to 1975. He returned to Lorain and worked in a general dentistry practice for a short while, but the wanderlust that he had felt ever since his childhood kicked in, and he moved to Shiraz, Iran, in 1976.

"Ever since I was a little boy I had always wanted to live in a foreign country and travel the world," says Dr. Montagnese. He got his chance during a conversation with the chairman of the prosthodontics department at Ohio State, who was a former Navy commander. It was then that he learned of a teaching opportunity at a university in southern Iran. "I was single, adventurous, and willing to go anywhere," he recalls. "I took the opportunity and did a lot of traveling in that part of the world while I was there."

Dr. Montagnese taught endodontics at what was then called Pahlavi University, renamed as Shiraz University following the Iranian revolution in 1979. He notes that he was not yet certified in endodontics, a degree he didn't earn from Ohio State until 1980.



*Thomas A. Montagnese, D.D.S., M.S.*

## Enjoy the Adventure of Learning *continued*

Life since then has settled down a little for Dr. Montagnese. He started his own private practice in his hometown of Lorain in 1985. He and his wife of 26 years, Kimberly, have four children and he enjoys golf, ice skating, and roller blading. He is also a fan of novels by thriller writer Ken Follett and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Like his fictional influences, Dr. Montagnese still lists "learning about things I don't know" as one of his favorite hobbies. Enjoying the thrill and adventure of learning, and the satisfaction of piecing together the clues to solve an endodontics patient's "case" are two of the most important qualities he would like to convey to his students.

"My message to undergraduate dental students is to remember that your education doesn't stop with graduation from dental school," Dr. Montagnese says. "When your experience is limited, there's a tendency to want to do only things you're comfortable with. But you should always be looking to gain knowledge about things you don't know as well."

In his role as a professor in the Graduate Endodontics Program, Dr. Montagnese practices what he preaches,

regularly bringing in attorneys, financial planners, and so on to prepare graduate students for things they may know nothing about, such as contracts, associateships, and handling the financial end of their practice.

"I also tell them to never forget about general dentistry," he says, "because endodontics relates to dentistry itself. I teach them to be thorough in their examinations, never to take anything for granted, and to stay in good communication with the restorative dentists, because the ultimate goal of endodontics is to restore patients' dentition so they can function with it."

Dr. Montagnese also wants his students to know that he appreciates teaching being a two-way street. "It's always rejuvenating for me to get questions from the graduate students that make me step back, think, and research a topic for myself," he says. "It's always gratifying working with the students here because they're really interested in learning, and they're all at different stages. It's a challenging and rewarding exercise for my interpersonal skills and my skills as a teacher and a clinician."

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## Endodontics Abstracts

Residents of the Endodontics Department will present nine abstracts at the American Academy of Endodontics meeting in San Diego in April.

The topics are:

- Access to care and endodontics: Treatment rendered in public health clinics
- Accuracy of cone-beam computed tomography scans and direct digital radiography in detecting overinstrumentation of seemingly accurate instrumented teeth
- An evidence-based approach to treatment planning endodontics vs. implant placement
- An investigation of the relationship between TNF- gene polymorphism and susceptibility to persistent apical periodontitis following surgical root canal therapy
- Incorporation of implants into the post-doctorate endodontic curriculum: A survey of the endodontic program directors across the United States
- Overview of factors determining endodontic vs. implants
- Referral-based collaboration between endodontic and pediatric residency programs
- Root canal treatment: Is it a right or a privilege?
- Use of the surgical operating microscope to aid in the preservation of original canal anatomy during fiber post removal