

New York University Dental College
345 East 24th Street, Room 1018
New York, New York 10010

Att: Dt. Michael Alfano, Dean

Dear Dr. Alfano:

It was a pleasure for my wife Rita and myself to be present to hear your address to the New York University Dental Class of 1953. We were very impressed by your recent accomplishments at the dental college and your long term vision for the school and dentistry's place in the overall health team.

Your theme of integrity resonated with me, not only as it affected the vital concern of student cheating, but as it applies to our institutions as well. It is my belief that our schools and profession perpetuate clinical dogma and resistance to change in a number of crucial areas. Adherence to entrenched beliefs in the face of compelling physiologic evidence for change, is my view an important factor for some iatrogenic disease.

Dr. Alfano it is ten years since my retirement. I fought the good fight for thirty odd years having written (not nearly enough), lectured and taught both nationally and internationally, was a faculty member in the Department of Fixed Partial Prosthesis for ten years before limiting my practice to orthodontics (actually functional jaw orthopedics- a broader concept) and temporomandibular joint dysfunction. I conducted five day courses on functional jaw orthopedics and T.M.J. at N.Y.U. in the Continuing Education Department for five or more years and thanks to Dr. Herbert Schilder's sponsorship as Dean of Continuing Education, did the same at Boston University for at least seven years.

I am proud to say that my youngest son is a functionally oriented orthodontist in Maine. During the time of his orthodontic training at Harvard (the Fordyce Clinic) I was invited to present a lecture which emphasized the crucial relationship of dental malocclusion and many T.M.J. disorders. At the conclusion of my presentation, the chairman of the orthodontic department expressed his surprise that I had made that connection and further stated that whenever symptomed patients presented, they were generally referred to a "T.M.J. specialist". An irony indeed !!

When the Dental Clinics of North America was published on "An Alterable Centric Relation In Dentistry" (July 1975) it stirred a nationwide hornet's nest in orthodontic, prosthetic and oral surgery circles. At the present time, some thirty years later, there is limited acceptance to the concept of centric jaw relation change, albeit even that, is generally ascribed to the redirecting of the growth potential in the adolescent. Less premolar extractions are being done by orthodontists; however the intimate relationship between dental malocclusion and T. M.J. disorders is far from general acceptance in most orthodontic training programs. It would not surprise me to learn that the same continues to be true at N. Y.U .

Dr. Alfano, the enclosed monograph written in 1975 addresses the very problems that we face in clinical dentistry today. The accompanying "letter to the editor" dated Jan.1991 is self explanatory.

I would enjoy meeting with you at the dental college and seeing the physical enhancements you've spoken of. The one thing I do not wish to do, is personally get back into the fray. The ball certainly needs carrying, but by younger people than myself.

Sincerely,

Philip H.Levy DDS