

2010

TEN UNDER 10

For the last five years, the *JOURNAL OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DENTAL SOCIETY* has been working with the MDS Standing Committee on the New Dentist to shine a spotlight on the “Ten Under 10”—10 MDS member dentists who have been in the profession for 10 years or less. On the following pages, you will meet the 2010 Ten Under 10 honorees and learn more about their thoughts on organized dentistry, challenges they faced when they started out, how they balance their professional and personal lives, and more.

To qualify for selection for the Ten Under 10, dentists must have graduated from dental school in the past 10 years, be current MDS members, and have made a significant contribution to the profession, their community, or organized dentistry—or all of the above. A call for nominations was sent to MDS member dentists in the fall and solicited on the MDS Web site and weekly *Membership Matters* newsletter. Nominations were reviewed and final selections were chosen by the MDS Standing Committee on the New Dentist in December.

**Congratulations to the
2010 Ten Under 10—the future of the
Massachusetts Dental Society.**

Parul Taneja, DMD, MS



Current Residence: **Boston**
Hometown: **New Delhi, India**
Office Locations: **Chelsea, Waltham, and Lynn**
Specialty: **Orthodontics**
Dental Education: **Manipal University, Karnataka, India (BDS); Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (DMD); and University of Oklahoma (Certificate in Orthodontics and MS in Oral Biology)**

What do you like about being a dentist?

The one thing that makes being an orthodontist unequivocally likeable is the patient demographic, which ranges from 8 to 18 years (in spite of the recent increase in adults), as they function like a time machine that prevents you from becoming obsolete. They keep you informed about everything new, from trends to social opinions, and in the process, they minimize the much-dreaded generation gap. The confidence that a radiant smile instills in a person very often transforms his or her perspective on life. Besides all the fun mechanics, being instrumental in this transformation is what makes me want to go to work.

What's the biggest challenge you've faced in your career thus far?

One experience that is indelible was finding patients for the licensure exam—something I faced both in India and the United States. I remember looking for decay for an ideal Class II preparation in dozens and dozens of mouths. I looked in automobile garages, in schools, at Morse Fishing and Co. on Washington Street in Boston, at Supercuts on Boylston Street. This remains, to date, to be the content of some vivid nightmares of mine.

You opened your own practice four years after graduating from dental school. What can you tell us about that experience?

Opening a practice was thrilling. It involved a lot of lists for tasks like getting workers' compensation insurance and ordering equipment. It was a liberating experience for personal expression. We chose everything, from the X-ray equipment to the color of the Post-it notes on the front desk—although micro-managing to that degree may not be recommended. The most challenging part of the process was establishing efficient systems that would ensure smooth running of the practice.

What advice would you give to other dentists considering opening their own practices?

Opening a practice is not for the fainthearted. It is an exciting and sometimes trying process that requires a significant investment financially and timewise. It is important to hire experts as needed. For example, there is no substitute for a good lawyer who will examine contracts in order to protect your present and future interests. Hiring intelligently is vital to the success of any venture.

Does being married to a dentist help you find a balance between your professional and personal lives?

A good balance requires a couple to share the same priorities personally and support each other's growth professionally. For two dentists, it is no different. It does have the fringe benefit of our being able to cover for one another if one person is unwell or has a study club. We have a toddler, so at the moment, attending meetings is a big juggling act for us. We share babysitting duties and sometimes one of us has to sacrifice listening to a favorite speaker. ■