

(October 20, 2013 MDHA President Cheryl Bentley Speech)

Thank You for giving me the opportunity to serve the Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association. I am proud and honored to be your next president.

For those who don't know me, let me tell you just a little bit about who I am. I've been married for 41 years to my husband, Jerry. My two children, Meredith and Jared, are in their twenties. Meredith and her husband Christopher are expecting a baby girl, my first grandchild at Christmas time. In my free time I enjoy wine, travel, cooking, and spending time with family and friends. My husband says "in that order." But, Dental hygiene has always been a defining part of me. I graduated in 1979 from Grand Rapids Junior College. Today, it is called Grand Rapids Community College. Immediately upon graduation I joined the Grand Rapids component. I have been hooked ever since. I have made lifelong friendships and memories that I will cherish forever. I am a life member of this association and proud of it.

We have spent the weekend in celebration of the MDHA's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 100 years of dental hygiene. We have been reflecting on our past, a proud past indeed. These moments in time have been captured in photos, memorabilia, and we now have visions framed in our minds. We have learned from our members before us how to get the job done. I am in awe of the insight these women had for our profession and at the members of today who strive to move our profession forward in this next century. A recent theme for the American Dental Hygienists' Association has been Proud

past, Bright future. In the words of Bob Marley, **“In this bright future you can’t forget your past”**. We have come a long way. Our members worked tirelessly on legislation that now provides us the opportunity to administer local anesthesia, nitrous oxide, and practice as a PA 161 collaborative practice hygienist. We as members must continue to educate new members about the strides we have made, in an effort to provide relevance to membership. We must also continue our efforts to grow this association because there is power in numbers. Our association needs to consolidate and streamline operations to encourage others to participate.

Robert Kennedy said, **“There are those who look at things the way they are and ask why... I dream of things that never were and ask why not?”** We need to ask why not? Just like our predecessors did. It may be difficult to imagine what is in store for us as we move forward, but we need to dream big. In Michigan, as well as throughout the nation, we are struggling with access to care, prompting others to look at new workforce models and concurrently we have the responsibility of protecting our scope of practice. We as educated preventive dental health providers understand the importance of licensure to ensure that standards are maintained. As an association we will continue to move forward in these efforts. We have far too many dental hygienists unemployed or under employed to warrant any new workforce model development not utilizing the dental hygienist as an advanced provider. Together we will protect our scope of practice and look to expand our capabilities.

I dream of a future where dental hygienists not only work as clinicians, educators, researchers, but perhaps act as an administrator or owner of a health facility. I dream of a future where dental hygienists will work in a collaborative health care facility alongside, doctors, nurses, dentists, physical therapists, and all other health care professionals. I dream of a future where people have insurance that covers all aspects of health care and where health care not traditionally treated as “medical care”, such as dental, vision and mental health are recognized as the important aspects of overall health that we know them to be. Scientific evidence supports that good oral health care contributes to good overall health. Dental disease is preventable and preventive services are what we provide. Together we can make a difference. We need to plan for and embrace the future. A goal of mine for this organization is to work on legislation to allow expanded supervision, for example; supervision by a physician, allowing dental hygienists to work in alternative settings, like hospitals, nursing homes or a physician’s office utilizing all of their capabilities. Let’s work together to make this a reality.

William Wordsworth said **“Life is divided into three terms - that which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present, to live better in the future”.**

My theme for this year is; Believe in your dreams, frame your future, and together lets frame the future of the Michigan Dental Hygienists’ Association. Thank you.