





Why me?

inevitably, during the Who's Hot candidate interviews at least one person questions, 'Why me?' As JDT editor, I am honestly astounded as I listen to their inspiring stories and it puzzles me that they haven't figured out the answer to that question yet.

This year's candidates have all demonstrated amazing drive, commitment, common sense and above all a resolute conviction that the dental technology profession has bettered their life. The Who's Hot issue is without a doubt my favorite issue to work on because it provides me the opportunity to dive deeper into the background behind some remarkable people, and every year I am the one that walks away with an energized view of what can be accomplished if you set your mind to it. Read on and you'll discover there's no question why these candidates are Who's Hot in 2019.





THE Couple

Matthew Martin, CDT was only a sophomore in high school in a small Michigan town when he started working with Dr. Jim Draper. Dr. Draper taught him lab work and over the next few years Matt developed an avid interest in creating restorations. Tired of the Michigan cold, he and some friends headed to Florida. He saw an ad for a crown and bridge technician at Knight Dental Studio, now known as Knight Dental Group, CDL, DAMAS, and decided to give it a shot. It was here that he realized there was true business potential. He was eventually promoted to department supervisor and after a few years decided he was ready to open his own lab. After leaving Knight he moved to North Carolina and opened Triad Dental Studio, CDL, DAMAS in 1983.

"I was very competitive," said Matt. "I wanted to provide quality products and service and I wanted to do it my way. It was never about becoming a big lab but rather fulfilling a need. I still think of us as a small lab even though we have 35 employees. With the industry changes and digital revolution, we believe our future is bright and plan to add infrastructure for continued growth."

Matt has performed every technical position in the lab and he does it well. His hard work and vision has shaped a business culture that focuses on doing the ordinary really well, every time. He is extremely passionate about employees, clients and patient outcomes.

"I feel fortunate that I'm someone that comes to work every day and gets to do something that I love," said Matt. "I can't imagine showing up for a job and not liking it."

Martha Martin didn't even know what a dental lab was when she met Matt in September of 1998. "He is the only blind date I ever had," said Martha. At the time, her career path was set in the banking industry and she had no intention of veering. Her first true introduction to the industry was when she attended the NADL Vision 21 meeting at Bally's in 1999. She was intrigued by the profession and Matt's passion for the industry. After marrying Matt that same year, he asked her to join him in the laboratory and oversee the financial management.

Matthew and Martha Martin

Triad Dental Studio, CDL, DAMAS, Greensboro, N.C.

What is the hottest thing in dental technology today?

Matt: The digital revolution has arrived; chairside scanning, advancements in materials such as polychromatic multi-layered zirconia, modelless monolithic restorations, and open architecture provides an almost unlimited amount of resources for dental solutions.

Martha: The continuous evolution of milling and printing. I find both fascinating. We are constantly improving our workflow utilizing these new technologies.

What industry change would you make if you could?

Matt: I would like to see the prescribing dentists be required to only receive devices from a certified laboratory.

Martha: More involvement by laboratories at the state and national level via the associations. Also, more support and recognition for Certified Dental Technicians among peers and the dental community.

Who has had the most influence on your career?

Matt: I started working when I was 15 as a technician for Dr. Jim Draper, a private practice dentist. His mentorship provided invaluable insight into dental devices and patient care that significantly shaped my perspective on clinical dentistry. My next inspiration was when I worked at Knight Dental Group, CDL, DAMAS, a commercial dental lab in Clearwater, Fla. Robert Warner and Al Chevillier taught me about the laboratory business and were extremely influential on my career during the nine years I was there.

Martha: My parents. They groomed me from early age to be a career-minded business woman and instilled the value of making good decisions regarding managing money, purchasing, investing and giving back.

What do you hope to accomplish five years from now?

Matt: I hope to continue to learn, grow the lab and be a valuable member of the dental profession.

Martha: I hope that we can continue to build a strong infrastructure with quality, highly skilled technicians and staff who are passionate about our industry. I also would like to double our sales maintaining the same quality and consistency that we produce today.

What do you think is the biggest opportunity as the profession moves into the future?

Matt: Technicians have never had a brighter future than they have today. Educational opportunities abound and are easily accessible; knowledge is fuel that can generate exceptional results.

Martha: As a whole, the dental community will see major advances in dental care and treatment options. For technicians, the opportunity lies in incorporating new technologies within your lab and developing your skill set to become a valued asset to dental team.



“Given our work and travel schedules, it just made sense but it wasn’t an easy decision,” said Martha. “I had worked very hard to get in position with my investment career and had just received my broker’s license. With my accounting background and financial training, however, I knew I could manage the lab finances and make a difference.”

Matt chimes in that Martha was a perfect fit. Working together hasn’t posed too many challenges; Matt covers technical side and Martha covers the financial and management.

“We sometimes hear comments that employees don’t know who the boss is,” said Martha. “It depends on the decision that needs to be made. We have full autonomy and we trust each other. When you work with someone that is your partner in life and in business, it is important that you accept their decisions within their respected areas. The few times we’ve had disagreements we always wait to discuss away from the staff. So far this approach has worked out well.”

Growing a successful dental laboratory in the city of Greensboro, N.C. took some hard work. It’s in their nature to constantly be on the lookout for trends and to search for ways to make the business better. Their personal investment and commitment to the lab has created a remarkable work culture for employees.

Martha said, “We built a world-class facility for our staff in 2003, with ample space, complete vacuum and extraction systems to maintain good air quality and acoustical ceiling tiles for noise reduction. We expect quality work from our employees, we produce exceptional products, and therefore we needed to provide an excellent working environment.”

Matt said, “Employees show up every day and know they are expected to perform at a high standard. I have been very consistent over my career regarding the quality of the products that leave our building. I am not willing to settle for less.”



Involvement with the NADL through certification, meetings and leadership has provided the Martins with the inspiration to constantly work on improving the lab. Matt has maintained his certification for 42 years; Triad is a Certified Dental Laboratory and has been a DAMAS lab since 2008. Martha is currently serving as a trustee for the Foundation for Dental Laboratory Technology and as a director for the North Carolina Dental Laboratory Association. They value the opportunity to build strategic alliances with colleagues and vendors and to share experiences with people they have known for decades. This interaction and learning environment inspires them to believe in the strength and potential of the future.

“One of the best things technicians can do to better their future is learn multiple skill sets; the days of learning just one thing are over,” said Matt. “The more they understand each component of a restoration and each department function, the more valuable they become and we encourage cross-training. We also strongly encourage certification. Once a technician becomes a CDT we give them a \$1,500 bonus and we pay for their renewals and continuing education credits.”

The Martins are excited about the industry as a whole, the changes that are occurring with technology and the added value that it’s bringing to the industry. When it comes to new technology and materials, they consider themselves early adopters after carefully weighing ROI. Martha looks for an 18 to 24 month ROI given the rapidly changing advancements in the industry. They are passionate about the artistry and science that goes into each restoration, have spent the past 35 years trying to blend it all together and are dedicated to keep moving it forward.

Matt and Martha just celebrated Triad’s 35th anniversary by hosting a party at Sedgefield Country Club for their top clients, staff, advisory board and family.

Martha said, “It was time to celebrate and recognize all the people who have contributed to the success of the lab. We are very thankful for the clients who have placed their trust and confidence in us over the years as well as the staff who make it happen every day. It was a great event, enjoyed by all who attended.” **JDT**

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