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**PJ Sandler**

# Inspiring the next generation

Alison and I will be in Florence this week at the Italian Orthodontic Conference, as we have been invited to speak on the 'Girl power' section of the conference. We are giving a two-header, basically a retrospective of our careers, hoping that by speaking to a young Italian audience we can inspire them on many counts to hopefully enrich many aspects of their orthodontic careers.

To derive maximum understanding of, and satisfaction from, their clinical careers, we will try to persuade them to take photos of every patient, every visit. We will detail the 'Damascene conversion' that we experienced, on the very first UK straight wire course run by Bennett and McLaughlin in 1987, when for the first time in our careers, we saw high-quality, visit-by-visit photographs, from start to finish. The shrouds truly fell away, and from that moment on, orthodontics was no longer a mystery!

We will extoll the virtues of orthodontic research and encourage them to get involved at some level, ideally as part of multi-centre randomized controlled trials, an experience offered to us, and many of our friends, through the vision and the persistence of Kevin O'Brien. It resulted in the 23 co-authors getting five major publications in the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics*, and even sharing a research prize awarded by the Americans for our work. Research in one form or another has occupied most of the past 30-plus years and turns out to be an extraordinarily rewarding part of our careers.

The 'political' part of orthodontics is not everyone's 'cup of tea', but again it can be challenging and often extremely interesting, and for sure, all those political jobs have to be done. If we don't volunteer to do them, you can be sure someone will be appointed to fill that vacancy ... and that may not turn out for the best. Again, for well over 30 years Alison and I have served the BOS in many various capacities, both ending up at one point running the show. I would discourage all young orthodontists from asking 'What is my specialty organization doing for me?' I'd rather they ask 'What can I do for the specialty?'

The most rewarding part of our entire careers has been involvement with conferences. I had the privilege of chairing the British conference in 2004 and 2006, and in 2005 ran the unforgettable 'Church House' gig with Kokich, Spears and Mathews, where an extraordinary amount of money was spent flying this trio from Seattle to truly entertain us with world-class interdisciplinary work, the likes of which had never been seen before in the UK. On the back of these successes, the same organizing team was commissioned in 2006, under the watchful eye of Ann Wright, to plan for the 8th International Orthodontic Conference in 2015. That group of now consultants, specialists and (retired) professors put in 9 years of preparation and planning to ensure the meeting ran successfully. And I suspect not one of them would have missed the experience for the world! It was certainly a privilege for Alison and me to have worked with them all on that unforgettable meeting.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to invite my friend and colleague, Dr Flavia Artese, to provide us with her Guest Editorial, to invite us all to the 10th IOC, due to be held in Rio this time next year.

*All articles published in Orthodontic Update are subject to review by specialist referees in the appropriate dental disciplines.*