

N. Wayne Hiatt Rising Star Award: Dr. Zachary Mellion

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As a young orthodontist, Dr. Zachary Mellion has already made significant contributions to organized dentistry. For his efforts, Dr. Mellion will receive the ODA's N. Wayne Hiatt Rising Star Award on Friday, Sept. 14, 2012, at this year's Callahan Celebration of Excellence, held in conjunction with the 146th Ohio Dental Association Annual Session in Columbus, Ohio.

"He is a very vibrant, successful young dentist with great leadership capacity," wrote Dr. Jennifer Jerome, Immediate Past President of the Akron Dental Society, in her nomination letter. "He is an inspiration to his colleagues and patients alike. There is no doubt that Dr. Mellion's passion for what he does will allow him to accomplish great things in the future, as he has in the past, for our profession."

Dr. Mellion said he is honored to receive the Rising Star Award. "It's a great honor to be recognized by the ODA," he said. "It's a great organization, and I'm proud to be part of it."

Dr. Mellion became interested in dentistry, and in particular orthodontics, at a young age from watching his father, Dr. Joseph Mellion, who opened an orthodontics practice with his two brothers in 1980.

"I was exposed to it through my father's practice," Dr. Zachary Mellion said. "Orthodontics is a great opportunity for me to be able to work in the medical field, but also have the independence of a small business owner. I like both parts – I really enjoy interacting with patients, but I also enjoy the business aspects."

Dr. Mellion received his D.M.D. from Case Western Reserve University in 2004 and his master's degree in orthodontics from St. Louis University in 2006.

"I loved dental school, loved every moment of it," Dr. Mellion said, adding that he found it to be very challenging, but also very fulfilling.

Upon graduation, Dr. Mellion returned to Mellion Orthodontics, the practice started by his father and uncles. His cousin, Dr. Nathan Mellion, also practices with them. They have offices in Akron, Uniontown, Massillon, Medina and Brunswick.

"My favorite part is the patients. I really enjoy getting to know my patients," Dr. Mellion said, adding that it's not just about teeth for him, and he likes to get to know his patients on a personal level.

The other aspect he enjoys most is being involved in the community. Dr. Mellion said his practice is involved in educational programs at local schools, and they also like to participate in or sponsor local school fundraisers and activities.

Dr. Mellion is also an assistant clinical professor at the Case Western Reserve University Department of Orthodontics and a guest lecturer with the Stark State Dental Hygiene Program. He

said he discovered he loved to teach when he was a teacher's assistant for a gross anatomy class during dental school and through helping out at sports camps and coaching throughout college and dental school.

Dr. Mellion said he thinks it's important to be involved in organized dentistry as a way to give back to the profession.

"I think dentistry provides all of us the potential to have a very good life, and I think it's important to give back," he said. "No matter what profession, it's always important to give back. If you're proud of what you do, you want to make it better for the next generation."

With the ODA, Dr. Mellion is Chair of the Subcouncil on New Dentists and has been a member of the Strategic Planning Committee. With the Akron Dental Society, Dr. Mellion is secretary, a Delegate to the ODA, Chair of the Membership Committee, and a Finance Committee member. He also is on the Board of Directors for the Orthodontic Education and Research Foundation. On top of these leadership roles, Dr. Mellion also is a member of several other professional organizations and he has received several awards for his contributions to dentistry.

"Dr. Mellion has been closely involved with organized dentistry since his years in Dental School at CWRU. He has served at the student, local and state levels in several capacities," Dr. Jerome wrote.

Dr. Mellion has helped increase membership on the ODA Subcouncil on New Dentists, and under his leadership the subcouncil has been extremely active in recruiting new dentists to organized dentistry. Dr. Mellion has helped organize panel discussions for dental students, and he helped pilot the ODA's National Signing Day, which resulted in a greater than 90 percent conversion rate of students to organized dentistry. He also helped to develop the ODA's new website, which was launched at the beginning of this year.

Dr. Mellion said the advice he has for other new dentists is to set goals and focus on accomplishing those goals before moving forward.

"I think it's important to set goals and timelines," he said. "It's good to take things step-by-step, and focus on things you really want to do well, and do those things well before moving on."

Dr. Mellion said he finds inspiration in his career by always trying to improve his skills and abilities.

Outside of dentistry, Dr. Mellion enjoys spending time with his family and cycling. Dr. Mellion and his wife, Keira, who is a veterinarian, met in an organic chemistry class they took together one summer. They have a 3-year-old son named Benedikt and a 7-month-old daughter named Georgia. Dr. Mellion and his family live in Akron.

Congratulations to Dr. Zachary Mellion!

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