

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# Samuel C. Muslin, D.D.S. '77

CWRU DENTAL SCHOOL SET THE BAR THEN, CAN SET THE BAR NOW

### *In his own words...*

All my fellow graduates of the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine should be appreciative of their training. The school, newly built during the seventies, set the bar for what a dental education should be. Now it is time to restore it to its greatness for the next generation of dental students. It is our legacy and the future dental students deserve to learn in a state-of-the-art facility by the best instructors in the world.

CWRU was my first choice in dental schools because of the incredible reputation that the school had earned in the California University textbooks back in the early 1970s. As a Californian, I had reservations about saying goodbye to the ocean to study in Cleveland, but the CWRU experience did not disappoint. I made lifelong friends with Clevelanders such as **Anthony LoPresti, D.D.S. '77**.

One upperclassman truly influenced my path. He was **Stephen Cooke, D.D.S. '75**, who had a unique approach in the dental clinic. He told me to go to the toughest-grading clinical instructors because "they will teach you something." The strategy was to learn from these demanding men even if that meant taking an occasional brutal critique of my work.

Following that advice, I completed all of the clinical requirements in just three years. With a sense of accomplishment, and to be



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honest, devoid of another idea at the time, I approached the dean of the school at that time, **Thomas Demarco, D.D.S.**, to request an early graduation. The conversation was brief. Dean Demarco seemed to take pleasure in telling me, in no uncertain terms, "NO!" However, in exchange for the outright denial, he offered me what he termed "action."

The very next day this action flooded my life. It included very tough cases like full mouth reconstructions, hospital periodontal surgeries, complex orthodontics, endodontics and a lot of restorative dentistry. It was overwhelming and technically challenging. The most valuable part of the Dean's action was that it taught strategic thinking. How was a wannabe doctor going to have the fortitude to rely on what he has been taught, while at the same time harvesting the bravery to trust his instincts?

The academic, technical, and problem-solving training at the CWRU dental school was nothing short of phenomenal. My education made transitioning into private practice a survivable feat. However, it was the foundation provided by the discipline of strategic thinking—discipline born in the teaching clinics—that has allowed me to take dentistry to the next level in my practice for the past 30 years.

Your continued support will foster the next generation of strategic dental innovators. ■

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