



NATIONAL  
DENTAL  
ASSOCIATION

# FLOSSLINE

Winter 2023

President Dr. Marlon Henderson  
Passes the Flame of Leadership to  
President-Elect Dr. Nicole Cheek  
- December 9, 2023

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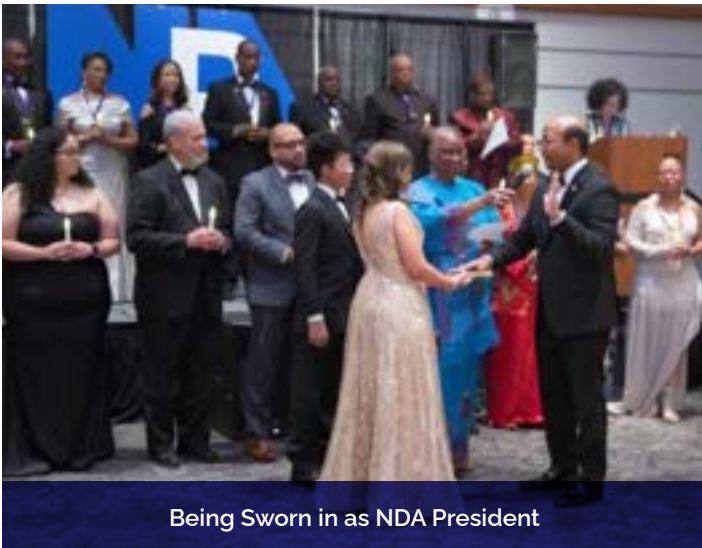
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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**G**reetings to our magnanimous and trusted National Dental Association Family. It has been an honor and a glorious privilege to serve as the 99th President of our historic, iconic, and legendary organization. After well over 110 years, the mission of the National Dental Association is still poignant and efficacious. As I have previously stated, we have been divinely chosen to carry the torch of the NDA valiantly into the future – our future is now. In 2023, we have remained focused and intentional in “Bridging the Generational Gap: Back to the Future of Advancing Oral Health Equity, Student Mentorship, and Raising Our Profile.”

From the beginning, our administration saw the National Dental Association breaking new ground in Shreveport, Louisiana at the 99th Presidential Inauguration and Scholarship Gala. For the first time during a presidential inauguration, we held (thanks to Dr. Hazel Harper and Dr. Nicole Cheek) NDA-HEALTH NOW® with the Shreveport Chapter of The Links, Incorporated at Caddo Heights Elementary School. Additionally, we celebrated the first New Dentist Committee Presidential Inauguration Mixer “Glow Party.” From the opening with the Krewe of Sobek to my wife Nikki, my son “Max on the Sax”, and my mother Martha participating in the program, our inauguration was the perfect blend of honoring our past while taking our first steps towards “bridging the generational gap” in 2023.

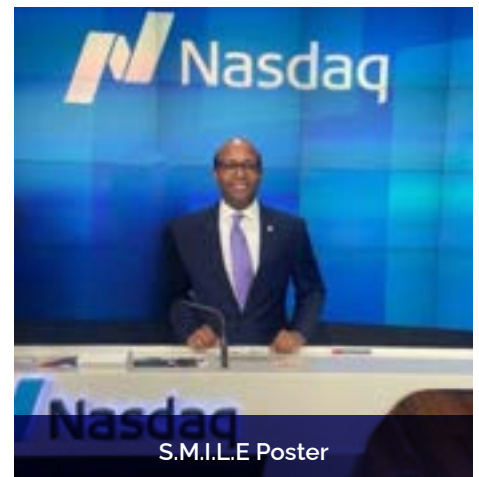


Being Sworn in as NDA President

In 2023, our administration selected the three following tactics from our 2021-2024 NDA Strategic Plan upon which to focus to help us to “build bridges”: mentorship, leadership development, and membership. We were propelled with the wonderful introduction of the S.M.I.L.E. (Student Mentoring with Immersive Learning and Enrichment) Healthcare Pathway Program while “Ringing the Bell” at Nasdaq with Henry Schein. The subsequent successful launch of the S.M.I.L.E. Healthcare Pathway Program this summer in Washington DC is truly a testament to the impact of the NDA mission (“advocating for the needs of and mentoring dental students of color”). We made major strides in addressing our “call to action” to advance oral health equity



Outreach at Caddo Heights Elementary



S.M.I.L.E Poster

by improving from the 3.8% of African Americans dentists in the United States towards representation in dentistry that mirrors that of society.

As we know, by increasing the number of providers in underrepresented and underserved populations, we can effectively remove systemic barriers to care in the workforce, increase the pool of diverse dental educators (which will positively impact the recruitment and retention of minority dental students), and provide much needed hope and “raise our profile” in the communities we serve. I am truly thankful to ALL responsible for making our launch a success. With enthusiasm and effective leadership in place, the S.M.I.L.E. program is poised to grow (expanding next year to Nashville, Tennessee) and to become another signature effort of the NDA that started with us.



NDA Family at Nasdaq with Henry Schein



With NDAF President Dr. John Daniels, ACD President Dr. Robert Lamb, and Principal Consultant LaVette Henderson



NDA Family/ACD Inductees with ACD President Dr. Robert Lamb

In regards to our second area of focus, our administration viewed leadership development within the National Dental Association as critical and pivotal to our future. It is imperative that we prepare the next generation of leaders to properly, effectively, and valiantly carry the torch or mantle of the NDA “boldly” into the future. As we develop strong and capable leaders, we must be sure to offer the support necessary. We’ve come too far to become our own worst enemies and to oppress each other due to generational misconceptions (age), gender biases, and geographic preferences. I am thrilled with the return and very well received Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute Session sponsored/presented by the American College of Dentists President Dr. Robert Lamb and Past ACD President Dr. Steven Chan at our 110th Annual NDA Convention in New Orleans. From a historical perspective, the late Dr. Eddie G. Smith authored the first



At 110th NDA Annual convention

Constitution of the NDA, served as NDA President from 1972-1973, and is affectionately known as the "Father of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA)". Dr. Smith "passionately believed that the strength of leadership would determine the future of the NDA; that sufficiently training and mentoring future leaders is the duty and obligation of current leaders." Dr. Eddie G. Smith was a true "bridge builder" and we've indeed gone "back to the future." Furthermore, I was humbled and quite honored to accept the 2023 Ethics and Professionalism Award on behalf of our Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute from the American College of Dentists.

And, I appreciate the "bridge building" efforts of NDA Past Presidents Dr. Pamela Alston and Dr. Edward Chappelle for nominating our Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute for this honor during my administration. Leadership development is a "bridge" that will ensure that our rich, 110 years young history will be rightfully celebrated, protected, and enhanced.



At 10th Anniversary NDA HEALTH-NOW®



With First Family at NDA President's Gala

Moving forward, our final area of focus from the strategic plan has been membership. Our administration concentrated on the entire NDA Family in an effort to improve our member experience. The National Dental Association was founded to ensure that access to oral health care is a right and not a privilege. The NDA was founded as a voice of the underserved, marginalized, and overlooked to advocate for those who can't advocate for themselves. The NDA was founded to make sure that young African American boys and girls could see realistic, positive images that they could one day emulate. In no uncertain terms, it was simply time to go "back to the future" and to "bridge the generational gap" together as an NDA Family at our 110th Annual NDA Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. The results were inspiring, impactful, and simply amazing. Our convention became a "Bridging the Generational Gap" Movement! I felt the same "chills" that prompted my desire to become NDA President while attending my very first SNDA meeting in 1999. I have my mentor and Convention Co-Chair, Dr. Stephen Brisco, to thank for both monumental professional experiences. Additionally, I thank Convention Co-Chair and Past NDA President Dr. Romell Madison for his efforts and example. The common "bridging the generational gap" theme of our various events (for example President's Symposium, Minority Faculty Forum, Women's Symposium/Luncheon, 10th Anniversary of NDA-HEALTH NOW®, 40 Under 40 Awards) were purposefully multi-generational with the goal of developing and instituting ways that NDA members can leverage our various stages/roles to fulfill the mighty mission of the National Dental Association and to keep us "fit for the future." I am truly grateful to ALL responsible for making our convention a successful extravaganza. Time will determine if our efforts will yield a more robust, multi-generational membership with standard and enhanced member benefits. Our members and all of our NDA Family Organizations need to know and to feel that "we truly see you," "we truly thank you," and "we truly have your backs."



At Diversity Summit Presidents Group Meeting at ADA Headquarters in Chicago



With SNDA Members at Howard University College of Dentistry's Commencement



With Mentors Dr. Stephen Brisco and Dr. Hugh McKnight

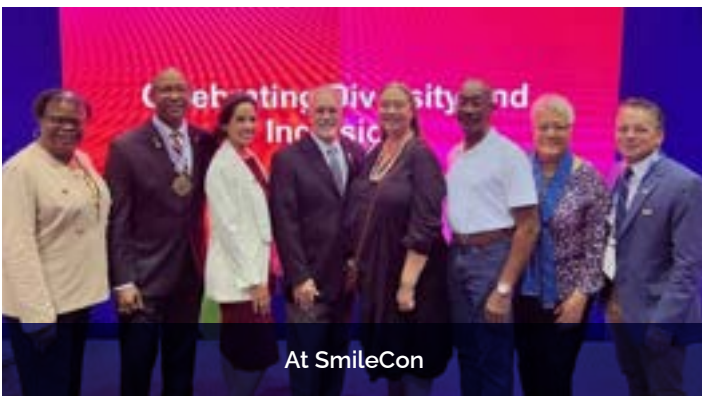


At BizCamp in Shreveport



Presenting at the NIH

As our mission and theme suggest, we must intentionally raise the profile of the National Dental Association. The profile of the NDA was raised through our many collaborations and meetings with the Diverse Dental Society, Hispanic Dental Association, Society of American Indian Dentists, American Dental Association, Diversity Summit Presidents Group. Our profile was raised during Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Panel Discussions at SmileCon and at the Greater New York Dental Meetings. Our profile was raised when I gave greetings at the 2023 Howard University College of Dentistry Commencement, at Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry's Alumni Mixer at the Hinman and Greater New York Dental Meetings, and at the HUCD Class of 1983 40th Reunion Dinner. Our profile was raised at my alma mater, The Louisiana State University School of Dentistry's Reception and Tour held for us during our 110th Annual NDA Convention in New Orleans. Our profile was further raised by quarterly meetings with CMS and semi-annual meetings with the Surgeon General. Our profile was raised by our presentation at the National Institutes of Health/NIDCR Stakeholders Collaborative Meeting. Our profile was raised with the induction of many of our leaders and members as Fellows into the American College of Dentists (including myself) and International College of Dentists. Our profile was enhanced through our 10th Anniversary NDA-HEALTH NOW® interview with WDSU News/New Orleans. Our profile was raised through the efforts of the NDA Student IP and Nurses Programs and CareQuest grant. Our profile was raised through our inducting the Old Dominion Dental Society into the Bay Shore Beach Hall of Fame. Our profile was raised by my serving as Grand Marshal of the Krewe of Sobek Parade and as keynote speaker of the James K. Elrod BizCamp Graduation in my home city of Shreveport. Our profile was raised through the personal, electronic greetings I extended to leaders/members each holiday. And, last but certainly not least, our profile was



At SmileCon



Building Bridges at NIH/NIDCR Stakeholders Meeting

indeed raised quarterly through the very magazine, Flossline, you are reading now.

Undoubtedly, I have worn the "Presidential NDA Medallion" to every event in 2023 with honor and pride. I pray that I have represented the office of NDA President in an exemplary manner. I hope that I've made you proud and made you feel good about the direction of your NDA. I trust that the enthusiasm, professionalism, and genuine passion for the NDA that we displayed has already resulted in a more hopeful, energized, respectful, and collaborative NDA. As an aspirational leader, I remain excited and committed to what the NDA is and can be when rise above "self and ego" and we all come together in support of our mission. I sincerely thank our NDA Executive Committee, NDA Board of Trustees (BOT Chair Dr. Kim Perry), NDA House of Delegates (Speaker of the House Dr. Joshua Tyson) for your dedication, encouragement, and support. Furthermore, I welcome the new NDA Executive Director, Tammy Dillard-Steels, and thank our National Office Family (including "The" LaVette Henderson) for your fairness, guidance, and staunch support of my administration.

Additionally, I thank our NDA Family Organizations, Council of Past NDA Presidents, Local Societies, Committees, Sponsors, and Advisors for believing in and supporting my vision. Lastly, I thank NDA First

Lady Nikki, NDA First Son Maxwell, NDA First Mother Martha, and the staff at Henderson Dentistry, LLC for sharing with me and supporting me during this journey. Thank you ALL for your commitment to the NDA Mission and to "Bridging the Generational Gap"! Now, we cross the bridge that we've built, pass the torch of the NDA, and look forward to the administration of the 100th President of the National Dental Association, Dr. Nicole Cheek.



Remember always - Today, and every day, is a great day to be in the Family of the NDA!

Healthy regards,

**Marlon D. Henderson, DDS, FACD**  
99th President, National Dental Association  
"The Bridge Builder"

**Community Service**

NDA-HEALTH NOW®- SERVICE, EDUCATION, ACCESS, AND PREVENTION ACROSS THE LIFESPAN IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

- COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS
- HEALTH FAIRS
- HEALTH EDUCATION AND STEM PROGRAMS
- DONATIONS TO FREE CLINICS AND GLOBAL MISSIONS,
- DISASTER RELIEF AND HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT



# CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES CORNER



Dear NDA Members,

I am thrilled to report that together, with our unwavering commitment and collective efforts, we have accomplished remarkable milestones in the past year. As we reflect on our journey, it's evident that our "Boots on the Ground" approach has made a difference, laying a robust foundation for advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

### Here are some key highlights:

- **Leadership Excellence:** The NDA Board of Trustees diligently identified, hired, and welcomed our new Executive Director, Ms. Tammy Dillard-Steels, whose exceptional skillsets align perfectly with our vision. Special appreciation goes to the NDA BOT Personnel Committee for their instrumental role in this crucial appointment.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** We proactively cultivated relationships with organizations sharing similar missions, both internally and externally. These connections are vital in propelling our future growth and development, ensuring that we are better equipped to meet the needs of our students, members, families, and the communities we serve.
- **Educational Advancements:** Collaborating to develop a scientific framework, we

aim to provide our members access to cutting-edge Continuing Education. It is our shared belief that this initiative is crucial for both NDA members and, most importantly, our patients.

- **Advocacy and Communication:** Our consistent engagement with CMS underscores our commitment to comprehensive oral healthcare, advocating for Medicaid and Medicare patient populations in rural and urban America. We continue to emphasize the need for a meaningful and increased reimbursement rate for dentists providing care to Medicaid patients.

- **Insurance Advocacy:** Actively communicating with insurance providers, we are pressing for fair compensation to dentists and timely reassessment of our reimbursement rates. Our message remains clear: the value of the care we provide must be reflected in fair and just compensation.
- **Dental Education:** ADEA, CODA, and US dental schools, our message echoes the core principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We strive to support and increase the number of diverse applicants accepted and graduated from our dental schools, ensuring a supportive environment for students and faculty of color that is conducive to learning, teaching, and graduating.

- **Gratitude and Call to Action:** To the dedicated NDA Board of Trustees, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support of the NDA Mission and my role as Chairman. Now, I urge all dentists to consider joining the National Dental Association, and for our valued members, kindly ensure your continued support by paying your 2024 dues. To the NDA Board of Trustees, please pay your 2024 dues in December 2023, ensuring we start the new year on a strong financial footing.

In closing, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the National Dental Association Board of Trustees to Dr. Marlon Henderson for his exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to the NDA." Together, let us stride into the future with renewed vigor and a shared commitment to advancing oral healthcare.

Thank You NDA members for your continued dedication.

Sincerely,

**KP**  
**Kim Perry, DDS, MSCS, FACD**  
NIH Clinical & Translational Research Scholar  
Associate Professor  
93rd- Past President  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees, National Dental Association

# Memo from the National Office

I am filled with profound gratitude and enthusiasm as I step into the role of Executive Director at the National Dental Association (NDA). It is with great honor and excitement that I join this esteemed organization, and I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Board of Trustees and the Personnel Committee for entrusting me with this invaluable opportunity.

The warm welcome extended by all those I've had the pleasure of connecting with, whether through email, phone calls, Zoom meetings, or the memorable Transition meeting and Gala, has left an indelible mark on my heart. Your hospitality has made my transition into this role exceptionally smooth, and I am genuinely grateful for the camaraderie that has been extended to me.

The National Dental Association, with its rich history, unwavering mission, national reputation, and societal significance, holds a special place in my heart. I am deeply passionate about improving oral health for all and being appointed to lead an organization of such caliber aligns perfectly with this lifelong mission of mine.

I am eager to collaborate with the dedicated leadership of NDA, its esteemed members, the NDA family of organizations, volunteers, partners, supporters, and the exceptional staff. Your commitment to advancing the dynamic goals of the organization is truly commendable, and I am excited about the collective

impact we can achieve together.

I fully recognize the vital role that the Executive Director of the NDA plays in improving the oral health of underserved communities and in shaping the future of African-American dentistry. It is a responsibility that I approach with utmost dedication and seriousness. I aim to preserve and build upon this organization's incredible legacy, always with an eye toward future growth.

Drawing upon over 30 years of experience in both the non-profit and private sectors, I have a proven track record of outlining, developing, and implementing measurable performance improvements to advance organizational missions. My recent role as the Chief Executive Officer of the Society for Public Health Education and my leadership positions in various prestigious organizations, including the Academy of General Dentistry, have equipped me with the skills and strategic mindset needed to steer the NDA toward continued success.

I am committed to utilizing every precious dollar wisely to achieve our mission, grow membership, enhance support for outreach programs, and positively impact the oral health of all we serve. No matter how our organization evolves, our unwavering commitment will always be to promote oral health equity among people of color, advocate for the needs of dental students of color, and elevate the profession's profile in our communities.



In the coming months, I plan to engage in extensive listening sessions to understand better where we are as an organization and where we aspire to be. Your unique perspectives on the needs of our membership and community are invaluable, and I am eager to hear your thoughts. Please feel free to reach out to me at [TDillardSteels@ndaonline.org](mailto:TDillardSteels@ndaonline.org) to share your views or to say hello and welcome. Once again, thank you for the warm welcome and the trust you have placed in me. I am excited about the journey ahead and look forward to contributing to the continued success and growth of the National Dental Association.

Warm regards,

**Tammy Dillard-Steels,**  
*MPH, MBA, CAE*

# PROTOCOL CORNER



The National Dental Association's House of Delegates is looking for enthusiastic members who can facilitate moving the organization forward. The House has multiple committees that require active participation in support of the organization's mission and vision, and they would love to see more members getting involved.

## The committees include:

### Committee on Awards

- Receive nominations for the annual awards of the Association, individual members, constituent societies or associations, and component societies or associations.

### Committee on Credentials

- Determine and record the roll of the House at each meeting and report at the time provided in order of business.

### Committee on Public Health

- Study, develop, and recommend standards and policies for organized programs relating to the improvement of the dental health of the public.
- Assist the component societies and other agencies in the development of

programs and policies related to the improvement of the dental health of the public.

### Committee on Legislation

- Protect and further the interests of the public and the dental profession in matters of patents, legislation, and regulations and make recommendations of plans and methods to the Board of Trustees in conformity with policies approved by the House of Delegates.
- Disseminates information, which will assist the constituent societies in problems involving the enactment and enforcement of legislation affecting the dental health of the public or the practice of dentistry.

### Committee on National and International Relations

- Cooperates with dentists and dental groups in the United States and other countries to exchange dental knowledge and information in conformity with policies adopted by the House of Delegates.

### Committee on Scholarship Aid

- This committee shall have the authority to investigate applicants for loans from the Association's special fund, created to help needy and worthy students in the nation's dental colleges, particularly at Howard Dental College and the Dental School of Meharry.

### Committee on Ethics

- Consider proposals for amending the Code of Ethics and make recommendations regarding the same to the

House of Delegates and the Board of Trustees.

- Provide advisory opinions regarding the interpretation of the Code of Ethics.

### Committee on Dental Trade

#### Reference Committee

- It shall be the duty of the reference committee to consider reports referred to it; to conduct open hearings and to report its recommendations to the House of Delegates.

In addition, the House is excited about building bridges with the reformed new dentist committee. The recent Specialist Saturday Webinar hosted by the committee received incredible feedback, and the House is looking forward to continuing to organize programming that caters to the voices of its members.

The NDA would like to extend a warm welcome to our latest dental society, The Grand Canyon Society, based in Arizona, as they become a part of this wonderful organization. We look forward to collaborating with their members who have already provided valuable contributions to the organization.

## Important dates for our delegates include:

- *Joint virtual meeting* Jan 20th, 12:45 pm-5 pm
- *Budget hearing and House vote will be on* Jan 20
- *Tentative mid-winter meeting* April 5-7 Los Angeles

# The Award Winning Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute

by Pamela Alston, DDS, MPP, FACD

Consistent with the mission of the American College of Dentists (ACD), the Ethics and Professionalism Award recognizes exceptional contributions by individuals or organizations in the promotion of ethics or professionalism in dentistry. This award specifically recognizes ethics and professionalism and is the highest honor the College can bestow in this important area. The 2023 recipient was The Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute of the National Dental Organization! The successful nomination packet was submitted by NDA leaders/ACD Fellows: Drs. Pamela Alston, Hazel J. Johns, John T. Daniels II and NDA President Marlon D. Henderson.

During the 2023 ACD Convocation at which Dr. Robert Lamb presided as ACD President, he gave a background on the Award. He stated, "Since its founding in 1920 the American College of Dentists has championed ethics, ethical behavior, and professionalism in dentistry. In keeping with its historical mission and its longstanding role as the 'conscience of dentistry,' the Board of Regents desired a tangible means of recognizing exceptional contributions by individuals or organizations for the promotion of ethics and professionalism. This



effort became the Ethics and Professionalism Award of the American College of Dentists, which is made possible through the generous donation by the Jerome B. Miller Family Foundation."

Past NDA President and ACD Regent At-Large Dr. Pamela Alston read the citation. "The National Dental Association's Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute is recognized for its ongoing emphasis on ethics and professionalism. Its namesake, the late Dr. Smith, served as NDA President from 1972-1973. He fervently believed that to carry the mantle of leadership, leaders must devote themselves to becoming students of the leadership process. For almost two decades, the Institute has provided training sessions that are timely, informative, and crucial to the goal of developing capable, effective, and seasoned leaders. Training in areas such as Legislative Advocacy, Leadership Succession, Organizational Behavior, Grassroots Mobilization, Ethics and Servanthood has equipped participants to make exceptional contributions to the promotion of ethics and professionalism in dentistry and in the communities that participants serve. Some Institute alumni go on to lead the NDA as presidents and as Board of Trustees chairmen. They also go on to lead with excellence, professionalism, and strong ethical grounding inside and outside of organized dentistry including community organizations and oral health care organizations. Institute alumni hold positions on the



Boards of academic, corporate, professional, and philanthropic institutions. The NDA Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute is most worthy of the 2023 Ethics and Professionalism Award." 99th NDA President Dr. Marlon Henderson accepted the award on behalf of the NDA. He was also inducted as an ACD Fellow this year.

Those of us who know the history of the relationship between the NDA and ACD are cognizant that the ACD has groomed the NDA for this award. In recent years, the ACD has sponsored the speakers for the Eddie G. Smith Leadership Institute Summer sessions during the conventions and the ACD Presidents and Presidents-Elect have attended the EGSLI sessions. This year, Past ACD President Steven Chan received many accolades for his keynote



session, "Organized Dentistry Leadership Journey: Lessons and the Pathways to Overcoming Vicissitudes Victoriously." He adeptly told stories in the Griot tradition of unforeseen obstacles and obstructions, stories of misdirection and sinkholes, stories of coming eye-to-eye with decisions—and some of the life and leadership lessons learned which are forever unforgettable to the session participants. ACD Fellow Dr. Fotini Anagnostopoulos-King presented a well-received session, "Ethics and Ethical Decision-Making Models."



## Dr. Leo Rouse Received the ACD William John Gies Award

The William John Gies Award is the highest honor the American College of Dentists can bestow upon a Fellow. Named after William J. Gies, who was instrumental in shaping the College and the entire dental profession, this award has been given since 1940 and recognizes Fellows who have made exceptional contributions to advancing the profession and its service to society. Dr. Leo E. Rouse, Howard University College of Dentistry Professor Dean Emeritus and an ACD Past-President was a 2023 recipient. Dr. Teresa Dolan read the following citation, "Dr. Leo Rouse has been committed to the dental profession since the 3rd grade when his family dentist became his role model. Since then, his energies have been devoted to the profession. Dr. Rouse has contributed in many ways – as a clinician, an educator, a mentor, an Army officer, a leader, and as a strong voice for the profession. His experience of having a strong role model instilled in Dr. Rouse the importance of mentorship and taking the time to instill in others the joy of dentistry and helping others. When Dr. Rouse speaks, people listen. He has used this gift to advocate for dentistry whether in the armed services, dental education, or the profession as a whole.

Dr. Rouse's career started in the military as a captain in the Army Dental Corps. Eventually, he rose to the rank of colonel and served in several leadership positions including commander and chief operating officer of the US Army Dental Command. His service has been recognized by his many awards including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Medical, the Army Service Medal and the Army Overseas Medal. After leading in the armed services, Dr. Rouse joined Howard University. At Howard University, Dr. Rouse was associate dean for clinical affairs and chair of clinical dentistry. He was appointed as the interim dean of Howard University College of Dentistry in 2003 and then awarded the deanship in 2004. Dr. Rouse retired in 2015. His distinguished service to Howard University was recognized by the award of emeritus dean status.

Dr. Rouse is a leader among leaders. His leadership acumen is widely recognized throughout the dental community. He was recognized by his peers with his election as chairman of the Board of Directors for the American Dental Education Association, an organization that serves as the voice for over 25,000 dental and allied dental education students, faculty, and staff. He was also elected to serve as president of this organization, a leadership position which is the pinnacle leadership position of our profession.

His exemplary service to the profession has been recognized by numerous awards including the ADEA Distinguished Service Award, ADA Distinguished Service Award, the Legend and the Trailblazer awards from the National Dental Association, and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the Western University of Health Sciences. Dr. Rouse has positively impacted the lives and careers of thousands of dental students, dentists, and allied dental professionals. He is most deserving of this distinguished award." Dr. Rouse has significantly impacted the NDA and its leaders over the decades. Gratefully some NDA leaders attended the Convocation in support of Dr. Rouse.



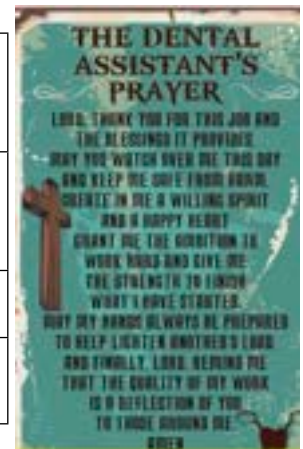
I am **NDAA President Minister Angela Bowens, BA, MPA**, and our goal is to increase our membership and elevate this organization to the highest level possible. We are celebrating our 60th Anniversary this year, and we are asking all dentists to register at least one staff member. There is work to be done that does not stop because laws continually change. We are trying to increase our membership by visiting schools and inviting their students to join NDAA at a very low price. It was an absolute honor to celebrate and support our NDA President Dr. Nicole Cheeks in Washington, DC.

We are looking forward to the support of the NDA to successfully move NDAA to the next level. To achieve our goals of providing students and dental assistants with low membership costs we need our NDA family to become sponsors of our programs and bring their staff members to the conventions. It is a winning situation for all because more assistants more traffic to scientific sessions, exhibit hall, and to work on community service projects.

Our journey begins with our continuing education for all registered members. We will have guest speakers that will provide credits from 1.5 to 2 hours per each session. The speakers will cover aspects of the dental office that directly involve the assistant and the clerical staff. The classes are filled with knowledge and the speakers make learning fun. We are having entertainment and much more for our 60th.

It is our inspiration to continue offering courses to prepare dental assistants and clerical staff for greatness, but we need funds and all Dentists to register their staff with us. We recognize that our fundraisers will not always allow us to cover the full cost of our events NDA family. We are asking for your help by selecting a Tier Level below of sponsorship that will help us fulfill our goals. There are four tiers listed below:

<b>Platinum Level</b>	\$2500.00 - you will receive a full-page color ad in NDAA Journal and 2 tickets to an NDAA function
<b>Gold Level</b>	\$1500.00 - you will receive a full-page ad in NDAA Journal and 1 ticket to an NDAA function
<b>Silver Level</b>	\$1000.00 - you will receive a ½ page ad in NDAA Journal
<b>Bronze Level</b>	\$500.00 - will receive a business card ad in NDAA Journal



All participating sponsors will receive recognition in our newsletter. You will also receive special recognition at our NDAA President's Breakfast/Brunch.

On behalf of the NDAA Executive Committee, it is with our deep appreciation and gratitude that we thank you in advance for donating to NDAA.

**HEALTH EQUITY CALL TO ACTION (HECTA)**

**HECTA**  
HEALTH EQUITY CALL TO ACTION  
TASKFORCE

HECTA brings together thought leaders in various health disciplines to create a cohesive call to action that works to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities and to elevate oral-systemic health as critical for the overall health and well-being of African American populations and address oral-systemic health as a driver for whole-body health.

**NDA**

By Hazel Harper Johns, DDS, MPH, FACD, Project Director

In 2022, the National Dental Association (NDA) received a \$125,000 grant award from the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health to design and implement an initiative to “Strengthen Community Voice and State Advocacy”. A research-driven initiative was developed to collect data assessing the impact of interventions of three existing NDA programs. The NDA programs assessed were NDA-HEALTH NOW®, the Interprofessional Student Leaders Colloquium and Summit (IPSLCS) and the interprofessional “nurses training program, “Oral Health and Nursing-A Team Approach to Population Health”. The 12-month program focused on the health and oral health status of the residents in the state of Louisiana. The majority of the state consists of designated health shortage areas where large numbers of families do not receive dental care and adequate medical care.

Throughout his Presidency, Dr. Marlon Henderson, NDA President and a native of Shreveport, LA has emphasized the organization's position on health disparities and equity stating, “The NDA is intentional in our efforts to enhance access to care. In our quest for oral health equity, it has long been important to the NDA to build a diverse pipeline and a pathway for future healthcare professionals. By advancing oral health equity, and strengthening community voices, there will be an increased likelihood of new state policies that will increase access to dental care in Louisiana's most underserved communities. I am proud that the CareQuest initiative focuses on strengthening community voices and increasing health advocacy in my home state!”

The 2023 initiative involved 1) a review of the three NDA programs to ascertain their influence on the community at large, the health professional community and academic institutions; 2) strategic alignment with like-minded entities with proven track records of community engagement and legislative advocacy; and 3) exploration of opportunities for informing and impacting health policy and health systems reform. A key component was the inter-professional student leadership development program and the emphasis on collaboration for collective action.

The Interprofessional Student Leaders Colloquium and Summit (IPSLCS) included hybrid programming consisting of virtual sessions and onsite sessions in New Orleans and Washington, DC. Emphasis was on dental shortage areas in the north and northeast regions of Louisiana, the central area and the southern region. The goal of the students' initiative was to provide evidence-based findings that could help them address the problem and provide recommendations to improve the access problems.

Now in its 6th year, students with demonstrated leadership abilities are selected to participate in this unique experience. Leadership training involves critical thinking, group projects and multidisciplinary collaboration to confront real-world problems. This year's training included:

- Fundamentals of research design, data collection and analysis
- Behind the Scenes with the RAM Leadership Team [www.ramusa.org](http://www.ramusa.org)
- Legislative advocacy for effective policy reform
- Workgroup presentations and mock legislative testimony

**The New Orleans program**, held from July 20-22, 2023 during the NDA Annual Convention, featured three outstanding leadership trainers: Drs. Alvenia Rhea Albright, Judy Greenlea-Taylor and Brian Swann. Participants included students from Southern University-Baton Rouge School of Social Work, Louisiana State University School of Dentistry, Dillard University School of Nursing, Xavier University School of Pharmacy and leaders from the New Orleans Chapter of the National Black Nurses Association. Attendees participated in each component of the program including mandatory webinars, a leadership training program and the NDA-HEALTH NOW® community outreach program for 200 summer campers at the Milne Recreation Center. They also participated in an interactive, sensory immersion session and a group tour of the NDA Exhibit Hall, where the group interacted with NDA exhibitors and received first-hand information from vendors about the latest advances in dental materials, prevention and state-of-the-art technology.

**The Washington, DC program** was hosted by the Howard University College of Dentistry and RAM (Remote Area Medical). It was conducted on three Saturdays in November (November 4th, 11th and 18th). On November 4, 2023, the illustrious leadership trainers were Suzanne Randolph Cuningham, Ph.D. (MayaTech Lead Researcher), Donnie Turner, M.A., J.D.(U.S. Senate Policy Expert) and Nicole Cheek, DDS, (NDA President-elect). On November 11th, Mary Brown (Remote Area Medical [RAM] Volunteer Coordinator) led the group on a behind-the-scenes tour of a community outreach event held at Prince George's Community College in Prince George's County, MD, hosted by the Prince Georges County Links, Incorporated and RAM. The group consisted of dental students from Howard University College of Dentistry, Public Health and Health Administration students from the University of Maryland and a Business major graduate from Hampton University. The New Orleans NDA-HEALTH NOW® Advisory Committee members served as virtual mentors for the group. The DC program concluded with group presentations, mock legislative testimonies and the students' video testimonials about the program.

Preliminary findings will be published at the end of the first grant cycle. Survey results and data analysis in the first year will be used to develop a Communications Plan that will provide opportunities for the NDA and its partners to speak with a unified, amplified voice for Advocacy, Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and to address oral-systemic health as a driver for whole-body health.



# Seeking NDA Members for Committee Participation

Dear National Dental Association Members,

As this year's term of service for committee members is opening, we are looking for new members to join various committees in support of the National Dental Association's mission. Our committee chairs have ushered in so many successful initiatives, and we are excited to find the next cohort of members who can continue bringing exciting and innovative ideas to the Association!

I ask that each of us will evaluate our experience and interests. I would be honored if you would consider serving on a national committee for 2024. Please email us at [NDA1913Chairman](mailto:NDA1913Chairman) or call 240-241-448 if you are interested in volunteering or gaining more information.

## Current Committees Openings

Audit

Annual Convention

Civil Rights Luncheon

The Flossline, Editor

Editorial Board

SMILE Pathway Program (mentor for high school students)



## 2024 S.M.I.L.E. Healthcare Pathway Program

The S.M.I.L.E. (Student Mentoring with Immersive Learning and Enrichment) Healthcare Pathway Program is a partnership between Henry Schein, Inc. the National Dental Association, and other professional associations to help mentor future healthcare professionals, enhance health literacy, expand diversity in the healthcare workforce and ultimately improve health and overall outcomes in underserved communities nationwide. The program is designed for high school students in grades 9-10th.

S.M.I.L.E. Healthcare Pathway Program will take place July 7 – 11, 2024 in Nashville, Tennessee. The students will be hosted by Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry and Fisk University. The program expands each year to historically diverse colleges and universities. This summer program introduces students to careers in oral health, including; dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, or dental office administrators. Applications Will Open February 1, 2024. Applicants for the 2024 program will receive notification by May 31, 2024. For the cohort of students that participated in the 2023 program in Washington D.C., a year-long schedule of activities has been planned to keep the students engaged. The Washington D.C. cohort's activities will be led by Dr. Reginald Salter, Director of Admissions and Student Programs, Howard University College of Dentistry and Dr. Richard Gesker, Executive Vice President for Dental Services, Mary Center Maternal and Childcare Center. For NDA members who are interested in mentoring a student, opening your office for shadowing opportunities, or speaking to students about opportunities in dentistry, **contact Dr. Reginald Salter @[NDA1913Chairman@gmail.com](mailto:NDA1913Chairman@gmail.com)**.

# Meet our 2023–2024 Executive Board!

SUBMITTED BY: SHONTÉ REED (UMKC '24), NATIONAL SNDA VP



## Let's Get Back to the Basics, Together!

*Since 1970, SNDA has been dedicated to increasing the presence of minorities in the dental field.*

Greetings My SNDA Family!

I am Brandon Wallace, a fourth year dental student at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as your Student National Dental Association President for the 2023-2024 academic year.

I am originally from the city J.Cole describes as "Dreamville" a.k.a. Fayetteville, NC. In this city I was raised with many dreams; dreams that eventually led me to pursue my bachelors degree at the illustrious North Carolina Agriculture & Technical State University better known as "A&T" (Aggie Pride!) Pirate blood runs in me as well as I attended Hampton University, where I received my masters degree. Being a part of SNDA has been at the forefront of my dental career, with a goal to serve as SNDA National President and here I am living out a dream come true. I am honored to work with such an incredible group of individuals and hope that together, we continue to find ways to better serve you.

As President, alongside our national executive board we will implement the strategic plan for the 2023-24 year entitled: "Back to the Basics". The strategic plan focuses on re-establishing the foundation our organization has been built on and further develop community through enhancement of our members' resources, support of our growing local chapters and by spotlighting innovations within the dental field.

This year for our 2024 National SNDA Conference we are taking our talents to LAS VEGAS, NV! I can assure you that the 2024 SNDA National Conference will be a conference you won't want to miss.

Thank you for trusting me with this opportunity, and I look forward to serving you!

Let's Get Back to the Basics, together!

### Brandon Wallace, MS

SNDA National President  
Tufts University School of Dental Medicine  
Class of 2024



## Let's Get Back to the Basics, Together!

*Since 1970, SNDA has been dedicated to increasing the presence of minorities in the dental field.*

Hey SNDA Family!

I am Shonté Reed, currently in my fourth year of dental school at the University of Missouri Kansas City School of Dentistry. I am incredibly honored to have served as a two-time National Vice President of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) for the 2023-2024 term, where my focus lies in creating unique spaces for minority students. Having grown up in Kansas City, Missouri, I went on to earn my bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences from the esteemed University of Missouri Columbia [MIZ-ZOU!]. While at Mizzou, I became a member of the illustrious, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Post graduation, I pursued a master's in Biomedical Sciences at the Kansas City University of Medicine and prior to starting dental school, I served as an adjunct professor of anatomy and physiology at two local colleges in Kansas City, MO.

Throughout my dental journey at UMKC, I have been deeply involved in SNDA's local chapter, assuming various leadership roles. From being the Historian during my D1 year to serving as the President during D2 and D3, and currently excelling as the Treasurer in my D4 year, I take pride in contributing to SNDA's mission of providing resources and opportunities to uplift minority students.

As the Vice President of SNDA I am thrilled to be chairing again, for our next national convention. I remain wholeheartedly committed to propelling, educating, and exposing minority students along their dental career paths. After the successful event in New Orleans in July 2023, I am eagerly preparing for an unforgettable experience in Las Vegas in July 2024. Also, in collaboration with National President Brandon Wallace, I will help execute his strategic plan to foster growth and progress within the organization! We look forward to seeing you in Vegas!

### Shonté Reed, MS

SNDA National Vice - President  
University of Missouri Kansas City School of Dentistry  
Class of 2024



## Let's Get Back to the Basics, Together!

*Since 1970, SNDA has been dedicated to increasing the presence of minorities in the dental field.*

Hi there!

I'm Raven Seldon, a third-year dental student at the UNC Adams School of Dentistry, and I'm beyond excited and deeply honored to step into the role of your National President-Elect for the upcoming year (2023-24) within the Student National Dental Association (SNDA).

Originally hailing from the vibrant city of Charlotte, NC, I made my way to UNC Chapel Hill for my undergraduate degree, where I also became a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. It was during these years that my fascination with dentistry really took hold. Fast forward to 2023, and I've had the privilege of continuing my academic journey as a double TarHeel, pursuing dental school at UNC.

When I think about SNDA, the first word that springs to mind is "family." My journey with SNDA started during my undergrad years, when I joined USNDA with an eagerness to connect with fellow minority students on the dental school path. Little did I know, this journey would lead me to one of my most cherished organizations in both my undergraduate and now graduate life.

Stepping into the role of President-Elect, I am truly excited about the adventure ahead. Working alongside this exceptional executive board, I'm here to learn, grow, and wholeheartedly support Brandon, our current president, as he brings his strategic vision to life. It's my goal to not only carry forward the amazing work that SNDA has already accomplished but to also take it to new heights.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve as your President-Elect and, soon enough, your president. I can't wait to dive into the incredible journey that awaits us. Let's do this, SNDA family!

### Raven Seldon

SNDA National President - Elect  
University of North Carolina Adams School of Dentistry  
Class of 2025

# Meet our 2023-2024 Executive Board!



My name is Dr. Kamal Smith, and I am a graduate of Duke University and the University of North Carolina Adams School of Dentistry. It was an honor to serve as the 5th National President of the Student National Dental Association, and I am excited to transition into the role of Immediate Past President. In this role I will advise the executive board on SNDA operations and help in the implementation of the strategic plan of the current president, Student Dr. Brandon Wallace.

**Dr. Kamal Smith**  
SNDA Immediate Past National President  
UNC Adams School of Dentistry  
Class of 2023



My first name is Kallan Thomas, altogether, like Mary Jane or Bobby Ray, although I'm affectionately known as KT to most. I find it hard to describe in words how thrilled I am about the next year with SNDA! I will proudly be serving as National SNDA Treasurer for the 2023-24 Academic Year. Much like the Carolina Panthers, I hail from both of the Carolinas, as I have spent a significant portion of my life in both states. I earned my Bachelors of Science from the illustrious University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2018, before completing an Applied Associates Degree in Dental Assisting in 2020.

Since starting dental school at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine in 2021, SNDA has become a huge and very fulfilling aspect of my life! With all the excitement that comes with our Annual Convention, there is an abundant amount of logistic and financial preparation needed to ensure our success. See you in VEGAS!

**KT (Kallan Thomas) Elle**  
SNDA National Treasurer  
University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine  
Class of 2025



**Kareem Ahmad**  
TREASURER-ELECT



**Brhan Eskinder**  
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY



**Kayla Gorham**  
RECORDING SECRETARY



**Marsha-Kay Hutchinson**  
REPRESENTATIVE to the  
BOARD of TRUSTEES



**Nnamelu Akunne**  
REPRESENTATIVE to the  
NDA FOUNDATION



**Jordan DeVoe**  
REPRESENTATIVE to the  
NDA HOUSE of DELEGATES



**Jada Graham**  
DIRECTOR of REGIONAL  
COORDINATORS



**Vicky Tran**  
MEMBER AT LARGE



**Chance Johnson**  
MEMBER AT LARGE



**Aysiah Kirk**  
CORPORATE ROUND TABLE 1



**Tareina Rogers**  
CORPORATE ROUND TABLE 2



**Mariah Cason**  
CORPORATE ROUND TABLE 3

# EMPOWERING DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION: STUDENT NATIONAL DENTAL ASSOCIATION CLINCHES DR. EDWARD B. SHILS ENTREPRENEURIAL FUND AWARD IN 2023

Submitted by: *Student Dr. Shonté Reed, (UMKC DDS '24)*



For their dedicated endeavors in advancing minority dental students, community outreach, diversity, and overall excellence, the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) proudly announces its prestigious win of the Dr. Edward B. Shils Entrepreneurial Fund Award in 2023. This accolade serves as a powerful testament to the Student National Dental Association's exceptional commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurial leadership within the dental community.

At the heart of the Student National Dental Association's success lies its unwavering commitment to promoting diversity within the dental profession. The organization has been at the forefront of initiatives dedicated to supporting and uplifting minority dental students. Through targeted programs and outreach, the Student National Dental Association has actively worked to bridge gaps and create opportunities for underrepresented individuals in the field, making significant strides in fostering a more inclusive and representative dental community.



The Student National Dental Association's recognition by the Dr. Edward B. Shils Entrepreneurial Fund underscores the organization's outstanding efforts in cultivating innovation and excellence among its members. Participating in dental student innovation competitions, the Student National Dental Association has provided a platform for young dental students who are also entrepreneurs to showcase their creativity and contribute fresh perspectives to the dental landscape. This proactive approach to innovative ideas has not only propelled individual members but has also elevated the collective standard of excellence within the Student National Dental Association.

Beyond the educational institutions, the Student National Dental Association has demonstrated a profound commitment to community outreach. The organization has spearheaded and sponsored numerous initiatives aimed at improving oral health in underserved communities. By actively engaging with the broader community, the Student National Dental Association has not only addressed immediate oral health needs but has also served as a beacon of inspiration for aspiring dental professionals from diverse backgrounds.



The Student National Dental Association's win of the Shils Fund Award is a recognition of its role in shaping the next generation of oral health care leaders. The organization's sponsorship of career development and mentorship programs has empowered aspiring dental students and entrepreneurs, providing them with the necessary guidance and resources to thrive in a dynamic healthcare landscape. This commitment to mentorship and support aligns seamlessly with the Shils Fund's mission to inspire and cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit among future healthcare leaders.



As the Student National Dental Association basks in the glory of the Dr. Edward B. Shils Entrepreneurial Fund Award, it stands as a shining example of how dedication to diversity, excellence, and innovation can transform the landscape of oral health care. The Student National Dental Association's achievements reflect not only the organization's commitment to its members but also its broader impact on the dental community and society at large. Through a relentless pursuit of excellence and a focus on inclusivity, the Student National Dental Association has rightfully earned its place as a beacon of inspiration for the next generation of dental professionals, and this prestigious award serves as a testament to their outstanding contributions.

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## **Lessons in a Lunch Box Acquires New “Fans”** *Program Endeared at ASDA District 2 Meeting*



Owings Mills, Maryland, **(November 8, 2023)**. The Children's Oral Health Institute (COHI) was invited to present *Improving Oral Health Literacy: Teaching Primary School Students through Lessons in a Lunch Box®*, during the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) District 2 Meeting. Members from the 6 dental schools received a memento, an orange fan shaped in the likeness of a smile that reads “I am a fan of *Lessons in a Lunch Box®*, after participating to an abbreviated version of this course on Saturday, November 4, 2024 in New Jersey.

### **New York**

Columbia University College of Dental Medicine  
New York University College of Dentistry  
Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine  
Touro College of Dental Medicine at New York Medical College  
University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine

### **New Jersey**

Rutgers School of Dental Medicine

The student doctors were excited to participate in the lecture and hands-on workshop. Every aspect of the lunch box was considered, including the dental hygiene kit that helps to make up this health education ensemble. After a brief question-and-answer session, Dr. Winifred Booker, CEO of COHI posed the question, “Are you smarter than a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grader?” Everyone in attendance was then given the task of assembling the *Dental Care in a Carrot®* case. This required effectively inserting the toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss inside of the carrot shaped container. Following the exercise, the COHI Program Director, Chiquita Veney said, “I am confident these student leaders are well prepared to present *Lessons in a Lunch Box* to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades during Children's Dental Health Month in 2024.

For more information about The Children's Oral Health Institute and to register a Title I elementary school for the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program visit [mycohi.org](http://mycohi.org).

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# Seeking NDA Members to Serve on National Committees!

**Happy New Year NDA Members!** Chapter 7 Section 12(2) tasks the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to appoint members to the various committees that will ensure the mission and governance of NDA are fulfilled. If you are interested in serving in a year capacity in any of our committees, ***please send correspondence and a CV to NDA1913chairman@gmail.com.***

**Auditing Committee** will review grants proposals and grants awarded to NDA. The Auditing Committee will ensure proper allocation of funds for programmatic design and will also ensure all deliverables as specified by the grantor are satisfied.

**Committee on Publications** The duties of the Committee on Publications shall be to:

- A. Act as an advisory committee to the Journal Editor.
- B. Act with the Journal Editor in the selection of the Publisher.
- C. Determine with the Journal Editor the policy in regard to frequency of publication and distribution.
- D. Act with the Journal Editor in determination of the advertising policy of the publication.
- E. Assist the Editor in the procurement of articles for publication.

**The Journal Editor** shall be the Editor-in-Chief of the official journal of the Association (The Flossline) and, as such, shall exercise full editorial control over such publications, subject only to policies and procedures established by the House of Delegates or these Bylaws. He shall have the right to appoint his editorial associates with approval of the Board of Trustees; he shall be a member ex-officio of the Publications Committee. He shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Board of Trustees or these Bylaws.

**The Editorial Board** will be appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees with the approval of the Board. The Editorial Board shall serve as an advisory Board for publications other than The Flossline (i.e. pamphlets, brochures, website, advertisements, marketing and promotional documents, and signage for programs/events).

**Committee on Policy Review** will review any and all public statements and actions by Association officers or representatives of the Association, made on behalf of and/or in the name of the Association, shall be made and taken only with the specific and expressed approval of the Executive Committee of the Association's Board of Trustees or full Board of Trustees.

**Civil Rights Luncheon Planning Committee** will work with the Executive Director to plan and implement the program for the Civil Rights Luncheon held during the Annual Convention. This Committee will also ensure the NDA will follow through with educating members and the community on social determinants of health that widens the gap for access to healthcare.

**Annual Convention Planning Committee Chair** will work with the Executive Director, the Local Planning Committee, and the Events Planner to ensure a smooth, informative, and enjoyable Annual Convention.

**Nominating Committee** will assist the Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The Committee shall publish an announcement of the process for nominations of officers of the organization.

It will be the responsibility of the committee to determine a candidate for each office to present as a slate during the Annual Convention. The Committee will also ensure all District elections for Trustees are appropriately carried out during District Caucuses during the Annual Convention.



Happy New Year! The National Dental Association Foundation Highly anticipates a prosperous and productive year in 2024. While we continue our strong partnership with Colgate to provide research fellowships and scholarships, we are also developing new partnerships to expand our philanthropic efforts.

A new scholarship program in partnership with Procter & Gamble's oral health division, Crest Oral-B, and the United Negro College Fund will be initiated in February 2024. The Bridges Scholarship Program will provide a total of 18 scholarships for dental, dental hygiene, and dental assistant students. The eligibility requirements and criteria for these awards will soon be posted on the NDAF website (<https://www.ndafoundation.org>), and applications made through the 'Submittable' portal.

As with our other programs, we aim to support the academic training of aspiring African Heritage oral healthcare professionals, and ultimately, increase opportunities and representation within our profession.

**John T. Daniels II, DDS, FICOI, FICD, FACD**  
President, NDA Foundation

## DR. NICOLE CHEEK INSTALLED AS THE 100TH PRESIDENT OF THE NDA

**"Standing on the Shoulders of Giants. Launching into a Future Beyond Imagination."**

The Inauguration Gala of the National Dental Association's (NDA) 100th President, Dr. Nicole Cheek, which was hosted by the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society (RTFDS) and held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center on December 9, 2023, was a spectacular event, befitting the grandeur of the occasion. Dr. Cheek's theme for 2024 is "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants. Launching into a Future Beyond Imagination". As attendees arrived, they were greeted by an awe-inspiring, three-story Christmas tree, beautifully adorned, which served as a magnificent prelude to the evening's festivities.

The Gala, a "sneaker-themed" event, was characteristic of the stylistic flair of our new President and demonstrated the organization's innovative and forward-thinking approach. Many NDA Past Presidents traveled from across the country to participate in the ceremonial Candlelight Ceremony, an NDA Inauguration tradition that symbolizes the passing of the torch of leadership. During the ceremony, NDA Presidents "pass the torch" to the newly installed officers of the NDA, the Student National Dental Association, the National Dental Assistants' Association, the National Dental Hygienists' Association and the Auxiliary to the National Dental Association.

The moment when Dr. Cheek brought her daughter, Harlem, on stage during her Inaugural speech was particularly moving. Harlem's role in holding the Bible during her mother's swearing-in not only added a personal element to the ceremony but also symbolized the importance of family within the organization and the nurturing of future generations.

The color scheme of the Gala, transitioning from cool blues to a warm, vibrant red, was a nod to the city of Las Vegas, the 2024 convention location, and a symbol of luck. The choice of colors marked a departure from NDA's traditional palette, reflecting a new era of boldness and originality under Dr. Cheek's leadership. The room buzzed with excitement, enhanced by the elegant décor and the presence of many esteemed guests, including local dignitaries, the members of the NDA Board of Trustees, the Dean, Administrators

and Faculty of the Howard University College of Dentistry, members of the NDA Family of organizations, and Gala sponsors. The Student National Dental Association (SNDA) had a strong presence with both national officers as well as members of the local SNDA Howard University College of Dentistry (HUCD) chapter in attendance. The attendees' attire, predominantly red in solidarity with Dr. Cheek's Vegas-themed vision, along with their stylish sneakers, added a unique and spirited flair to the occasion.

Dr. Cheek, the evening's central figure, was honored with priceless gifts, including a beautifully crafted crystal vase from her alma mater, Howard University College of Dentistry and an exquisite crystal sculpture from her chapter, the Washington, D.C. Chapter of The Links, Incorporated. The highlight of the evening was a surprise video presentation, chronicling Dr. Cheek's extensive service to the community through various outreach programs, showcasing her unwavering dedication and positive impact.

The Gala also featured a silent auction with stunning art pieces and an exotic African cultural excursion donated by Wisson West, owner of Serengeti, a local art gallery, adding an artistic touch to the evening. The printed program and accompanying graphics on signs and banners, designed by Abel Kingoo of DesignPrintElement, reflected the high standards of visual presentation that NDA-HEALTH NOW® and Dr. Cheek have always upheld. Photographer extraordinaire, C.G. Taylor, captured the essence of the evening. The convention center leadership team was exemplary, providing unwavering attention to detail and unexpected, but greatly appreciated, in-kind support.

The seamless execution of the Gala was attributed to the hard work and dedication of the planning committee, including Drs. Cheryle Baptiste, Ed Chappelle, Kenneth Bernard Chase, Reginald Cole, Floretta Cuffey-Terry, Hazel Harper Johns, Belinda Carver-Taylor, Cheryl Lee, Secunda Perry-Wright, Reginald Salter, Ms. Tiffany Gadson, RTFDS Administrator, and others. Their commitment and meticulous preparation ensured the event was not only a celebration but also a memorable experience for all attendees.

Prior to the Gala, members of the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society, including Drs. Albert Cheek, Floretta Cuffey-Terry, Andre Lloyd, Laura Muhammad, Mrs. Romella Rodgers, and Howard University Pre-Dental students, exemplified the NDA's commitment to community service. They conducted the NDA-HEALTH NOW® Community Outreach Children's Program, 'Passport to Total Health™', at Two Rivers Public Charter School. This initiative educated children on oral and systemic health, engaging them in hands-on activities, such as placing fillings, which were both educational and enjoyable. The program's success, prompting a request for a repeat visit, highlighted the NDA's significant role in community engagement and education.

In summary, the Inauguration Gala was not merely a ceremonial event; it was a vibrant celebration of the NDA's journey, its enduring commitment to community service, and its embrace of a future marked by innovation and inclusivity. The Gala set the stage for Dr. Cheek's presidency, symbolizing a new chapter of leadership, community engagement, and professional development within the National Dental Association.

## **Dr. Cheek's Inaugural Address was delivered with First Daughter, Harlem, at her side:**

**G**reetings to all esteemed members of the National Dental Association, Student National Dental Association, National Dental Hygienists Association, National Dental Assistant Association, and the Auxiliary of the National Dental Association. I am Dr. Nicole Cheek, and it is my honor to serve you as your 100th President of the National Dental Association!

Before I begin, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of our sponsors. Your support reflects your recognition of the NDA mission as a truly deserving cause. I would also like to thank the Gala Planning Committee Chairpersons, members, and especially the student members. (Please stand) These are dental students, DOCTORAL students, that have, for the last TWO whole days, taken a considerable amount of time away from their Final Exams (remember back, Docs, no small feat), to match the tireless work of the Committee to stage this wonderful event. Please, join me in showing our gratitude by giving them a hand. Thank you to all of the leadership of every NDA Family organization here tonight. A special thank you to my immediate predecessor, Dr. Marlon Henderson, Our Bridge Builder. It is through

your hard work and dedication that we persevere.

The NDA had its beginnings in 1913 as an organization formed out of exclusion when African Americans were denied admission to the existing dental association.

However, we have grown and continue today as an organization that safeguards the well-being, dignity, and rights of our oral health professionals, our students, patients, and our communities. It doesn't matter where we go, we are always highly regarded by the organizations and institutions with whom we partner.

This is so important because, as mighty and amazing as we are, the work we do requires more than what even WE can achieve alone. We need our allies and partners, organizations and foundations, and even corporations whose goals and missions align with ours, in order to achieve the monumental successes we have delivered in the past and must continue to deliver in the future.

At a time when diversity, equity, and inclusion are under attack, be clear, that means WE are under attack. Our efforts to move the needle on our 3.8% are under attack. The progress that we have made against racism and discrimination is under attack. This is a pivotal time in history when the NDA is needed more than ever. We are a shining example of strength, unity, and inclusivity, standing tall against the forces that seek to divide us. And know this. We may not regularly experience or witness situations where something racist, discriminatory, and/or damaging happens to our members or our most vulnerable populations. But when these things DO happen, it is NDA that answers the call.

When I first started working with the NDA, becoming its President was never my ambition. After graduating from dental school, while waiting for the State Dental Board to grant me my dental license, I needed a job. I received a call from Dr. Hazel Harper Johns to come work at NDA on our signature program, NDA-HEALTH NOW®, which had just entered its 2nd year of existence. I said "Yes."

A few years later, at an NDA annual convention, two Past Presidents approached me and said, "Nicole, you would be a great Assistant Secretary." And once again, I said "Yes." They believed in me and trusted that I would give the same love and care to our organization as they did and continue to do. I have continued to say "Yes," and all those Yeses have brought me to this night, onto this stage, and in front of all of you.

I love the story of Black Panther. The question "Who are you?" resonates so strongly within me. In the movie, that question holds immense power. As I stand here this evening, I do not stand alone. I stand here with all of you who have poured into me over my lifetime. I stand here with the ancestors who sacrificed and worked for a future they would not see but had faith would come. It is on these shoulders that we all stand, on the shoulders of giants, as we launch into a future beyond our imagination.

So, let us embrace the power of who we are. Let us celebrate our collective identity, our shared purpose, and the incredible impact we have on the field of dentistry and the lives of those we serve.

Together, with joy in our hearts, we will continue to make a difference and leave a lasting legacy.

Thank you, and may our journey ahead be filled with joy, unity, and unwavering determination.



# 100th President's Gala Recap



2024 Officers Inauguration

# 100th President's Gala Recap



Past Presidents with Dr. Cheek

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*\*Founding Members \*\*In 2018, Aetna a CRT Founding Member, became a subsidiary of CVS Health May 2022*

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(Updated 10/12/23)



3060 Mitchellville Road, Suite 215 Bowie, MD 20716

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED



SAVE THE DATE

111<sup>TH</sup>

CONVENTION

JULY 25-28, 2024

CAESARS PALACE