

Meet Paula Parsons:

an educator committed to her own continuous learning

Celebrating 25 years

When it comes to dental assisting, every day looks different. You get to meet new people, perform various procedures, and learn new things. That is exactly what Paula Parsons enjoys most about the profession.

Parsons currently sits on the NDAEB's certification board and has been a board member of the NDAEB since 1998. During this time, she served as NDAEB's president from 2000 to 2002 and from 2007 to 2008. If that weren't enough, Parsons also serves as the dental assistant representative for the licensing body for dental assistants, dental technicians, and dentistry for the Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Board on a full-time basis.

Of course, each of these roles is in addition to her day job. Parsons has been a full-time instructor for the dental assisting program at Keyin College in Newfoundland for the last 29 years. While she has many career accomplishments, what is most meaningful to her falls outside of her typical job responsibilities. "All of the things I'm most proud of are not what I get paid to do," explains Parsons, "it's the volunteer boards that I'm on, the various dental committees and organizations that I'm part of, and the courses I've taken to continue my education."

Parsons humbly explains that none of these opportunities would have been possible if it weren't for teaching, which opened the door to so many new experiences. For this, she's grateful for her previous instructor, Joan Lamswood, who saw her potential for teaching and always encouraged and supported her learning journey.

Her advice for the next generation of dental assistants is to do the same. "Step outside of your comfort zone and take on extracurricular activities that are tied to dental assisting," shares Parsons, "Think outside the box, continue your education, join various dental committees, take courses to develop new skills for your scope of practice, continue to broaden your mind, and never stop learning."

For her own involvement, Parsons is appreciative of Louise Mabey, the first president of the NDAEB, who had a vision of the bigger picture and really piqued Parson's interest in dental assisting on a national level during some of her very formative years. Parsons was truly inspired to learn about dental assisting from a national perspective and tried to absorb as much knowledge as she could.

Although she has remained humble throughout her career, Parsons' unwavering dedication does not go unnoticed. "What I have learned about Paula Parsons over the past eight years is that she is a steady, quiet leader who has an absolute commitment to dental assisting and the NDAEB. She is steadfast in her resolve to support the profession and make it the very best it can be," says the NDAEB Chief Administrative Officer, Steve Grundy, "She is an educator both by profession and by personal

attribute. She is happy to support others as they take the lead and the moment there is a gap in leadership, knowledge, or corporate memory, she steps in with such grace and a common sense touch to provide exactly what is needed. The NDAEB would not be where it is today without Paula."



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The NDAEB's president, Elroy Officer, shares the same sentiment, "Paula is the quintessential professional, dedicated, hardworking, thoughtful and passionate. I have worked with Paula in several different capacities and have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with her. I have learned and grown in my own personal development from such a fantastic 'role' model. Paula has a big heart with a gentle soul and is a dear friend."

Parsons is equally grateful for the NDAEB and its distinct mission to provide excellent quality exams for dental assistants and is proud to be part of a transparent organization that provides service that, "has been done so well, other examining boards strive to be like the NDAEB!"

Parsons is deeply appreciative of the contributions of all the NDAEB board members over the last 25 years, for their passion, and for their mentorship along the way. She believes the NDAEB has brought consistency to the discussion about dental assisting on a national level, "Dental assistants need consistency across the country, so all provinces have same processes, educational requirements, programs, training and licensing," explains Parsons, "It's a work in progress, but we will get there."

With Parsons on the team, there is no doubt about that.

As the NDAEB celebrates its 25th anniversary, we are proud to recognize Paula Parsons as a dental assisting difference maker.

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