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As one who practised general dentistry for many years, I see periodontics not as a special branch of dentistry, but as a discipline central to the practice of sound conservative dentistry. The aim of dental practice is to preserve the dentition in efficient function for the life of the individual. This can be achieved only by a thorough understanding of the masticatory apparatus as a functioning unit; I believe periodontics to be the key to that understanding.

With this statement David Manson closed his preface to the first edition of his inspirational book *Periodontics for the Dental Practitioner* in 1966, and it encapsulated a philosophy of dental practice which is as crucial today as when the book was published 53 years ago. The book was a classic and has contributed to the education of many dental students over many years through its various updated editions.

Many letters received after his passing testified to his great sense of humour, his common sense, and his kindness. It was said of him that he could always be relied upon for wise advice, which invariably turned out to be correct.” “His outstanding ability,” wrote one of his former colleagues, “was to absorb different views on any particular topic, and immediately be able to present a précis of them for further discussion to take place in an atmosphere of improved clarity.” “He must have been,” wrote another, “one of the first people to write about patients as real people, and to think in a holistic way.” He had a significant influence on the developing specialty of

periodontics, and an enormous impact on the training of younger colleagues, influencing patient care, improving treatment outcomes, and by raising the awareness of gum health at a time when little was known about its importance, particularly to general health.

Born in August 1924 in Dundee, he later moved to Nottingham and eventually to Leeds. He read copiously during a childhood illness and in one of the books he found at home, he read that African natives cleaned their teeth with twigs. The eight-year-old broke off a privet twig to brush his teeth with. His mouth and face were covered with city soot and he concluded that the trees of Africa were cleaner than the hedges of Chapeltown. David always said that this was his first piece of clinical research.

In 1936 he won a scholarship to the City of Leeds School. Almost immediately, as a consequence of the depression, the family business failed, his father was out of work for a very lengthy period, and they suffered poverty.

When the war came, in September 1939, he was evacuated to Lincolnshire, where he stayed for almost 9 months. Here, he encountered periodontal disease, for the first time, when the woman who took him in pulled out her own loose tooth!

In spite of the upheaval of nine months evacuation to Lincolnshire, when war came in 1939, on returning to Leeds he passed his school certificate examinations with distinction. He so impressed his teacher, who was aware of his family's economic situation, that he was given some younger boys to coach for their grammar school entrance examinations.

His favourite subject was Chemistry, and at this point in his life he wanted to be a research chemist. In view of his high exam marks the Leeds City Education Committee awarded him a medical scholarship, however his Uncle Jack suggested that it would be better for him to take up dentistry because, as he said, "The dentist is on the golf course after work every evening, and that's a better life," so his parents agreed. The Dean of the Dental School said that he would be delighted to have him, and so David's career in Dentistry began.

In 1946 he was taken to a party, on the promise there would be lots of food, where he met Hilda Bloom, who had a very beautiful singing voice. David was bewitched, and they married 2 years later. Although he became disillusioned with general dental practice towards the end of the 1950s, and considered giving up dentistry altogether,

Hilda supported him in switching from general to specialised dentistry and after gaining a Fellowship in Dental Surgery he aimed for academia in the only subject not fully explored at that time, Periodontology. He studied in Boston, USA in 1959-60 after which he started work at the Royal Dental Hospital in London. His students labelled him 'Mucky Gums Manson,' characterising the common trope about periodontists in those days.

He continued to research, gaining a PhD on the growth of the lower mandible in 1963 and became a popular international lecturer and teacher. He published numerous papers on bone loss and inflammation in periodontal diseases and was one of the early writers about the role of immunopathology in periodontitis in 1982.

He was a prominent member of the British Society of Periodontology, of which he was President in 1974-5 and was the first recipient of Honorary Membership, the Society's highest honour, in 1983, a mark of the great respect in which he was held.

David combined excellent academic and practical ability which served him well into his retirement when (amongst other things), he wrote biographies of his mentor Sir Wilfred Fish and of 20th century visual artists; one of his sculptures was exhibited at the Royal Academy.

'His curiosity, creativity and compassion towards the people around him lives on in us,' said his granddaughter, Ruby. The rising trend that we see today of positioning periodontology at the front and centre of dental practice is due in large measure to his legacy, for which he will be warmly remembered.

He is survived by his children, Lesley, Claire, Nicky and Andrew, and five beloved grandchildren.

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