

Dr. Peter A. Morgan

Hard work and attention to detail lead to smooth sailing in endodontics

What can you tell us about your background?

I grew up in a small town on the Allegheny River in Western Pennsylvania just 20 miles outside of Pittsburgh. I attended the University of Pittsburgh for college and dental school. Because it was during the Vietnam War, I had been deferred from military service, and so I entered the U.S. Army after I graduated from dental school. I was fortunate to have a very good dental internship at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and then spent 2 additional years as a Captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps doing general dentistry at Fort McNair in Washington DC.

Why did you decide to focus on endodontics?

Because of extensive exposure to oral surgery in the military, I originally thought of specializing in oral surgery. However, as I approached the end of my Army service, I began to think about endodontics as I enjoyed saving teeth over extracting them.

I visited what was then the School of Graduate Dentistry at Boston University (BU) and met Dr. Harold Levin. He eventually became a mentor and my partner in practice. We first met by chance when I walked into the school, and he was kind enough to take considerable time to explain the school and the specialty of endodontics to me. I left that meeting with tremendous excitement about the possibility of having a career in endodontics and training at BU. Not long after that, I was fortunate to have an interview with Dr. Herb Schilder. That led to a residency at BU, training under Dr. Schilder and many other talented and dedicated endodontists who were teaching there at the time.

What training have you undertaken?

I received a Certificate in Endodontics and a Masters of Science and served as Associate Clinical Professor at the school for many years. I am a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics (AAE).



In sailboat racing and in practice, all members of the crew need to focus on every detail to get a good outcome



I have served two terms as a Trustee to the American Association of Endodontics and am currently serving as a Trustee to the American Association of Endodontics Foundation. I am currently the managing partner of North Shore Endodontics and Brookline Endodontics in Boston and suburbs.

It is my association with the AAE Foundation that has been a real eye opener to me on the real world of endodontics. I have seen that there is a tremendous need for endodontic teachers in all of the dental schools and an equally important need for research to further our understanding of the biological and technical processes that affect the outcome of the care we deliver. This revelation has only been topped by the fact that the Foundation funding to date has been a result of a tremendous outpouring of support from endodontists and from corporate partners who see the commitment our endodontist members make and value their judgment. The Foundation is the only organization exclusively dedicated to supporting endodontic research and education. It provides support to every endodontic residency program in the U.S. and Canada. The Foundation provides over 1 million dollars yearly to support research

and faculty positions in endodontics.

Who has inspired you?

Dr. Schilder was the best teacher I have ever encountered. He was exceptionally smart, very demanding, and capable of explaining complex concepts in a clear way. His educational protocol allowed for little deviation from his prescribed technique. I have realized the tremendous value of this approach on countless occasions in my career when faced with difficult diagnostic and treatment cases. Herb knew that the oddities of anatomy and biology were looming out there. By giving his residents a solid understanding of diagnosis and disciplined treatment objectives, he equipped us for the real world of endodontic practice. Herb trained clinicians in an era when the specialty of endodontics was just beginning to grow. Dr. Schilder's legacy continues at BU through the BU Endo Alumni Association, which provides a forum for all BU trained endodontists to collaborate.

Tell us about your practice.

My career in practice began when I joined Dr. Harold Levin and Dr. Robert Rosenkranz. Over many years together, we grew the practice to a multi-office, multi-

doctor practice. Both of those doctors have retired from practice, and I am now fortunate to have Dr. Yuri Shamritsky and Dr. Fiza Singh as partners. Together we have continued to grow the practice, which now includes six offices.

Dr. Yuri Shamritsky began his dental career with a Doctor of Dental Science from the University of Moscow. In the U.S., he continued his dental education at Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine where he received a DMD and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies. He served for over 10 years as Associate Clinical Professor and Director of the Microendodontic Surgical Program. Yuri has inspired many students by his dedication to precise microsurgical techniques, and he has applied his skills to resolve many problems for his patients in our practice.

Dr. Singh received her Doctorate of Dental Surgery from New York University College of Dentistry. She holds a Certificate in Endodontics, a 3-year specialty fellowship from The Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and Masters of Medical Sciences from Harvard Medical School, including 2 years of research at The Forsyth Institute. Her specialized training includes Oral Implantology and Oro-Facial Musculoskeletal Pain/TMD Disorders from the New York University College of Dentistry. Dr. Singh is also board certified in Endodontics in Canada, where she is a member of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons.

We are also fortunate to have the following doctors in our practice:

Dr. Paul Talkov, who completed his dental school at Tufts University and endo residency at Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine.

Dr. Andrea Shah, who completed her dental school at Harvard University and endo residency at Tufts University. While a resident, she was recipient of a Research Grant from the AAE Foundation.

Dr. Andrew Bradley, who completed his dental school at Tufts University and endo residency at Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine.

We are very proud to have Dr. Schilder and Dr. Joe William's former practice, Brookline Endodontics, as a part of our current practice. Many of the doctors

in our practice had the benefit of Dr. Schilder's teaching during their training. Continuing his treatment philosophy in the office where he practiced has been very professionally rewarding for us.

What is the most satisfying aspect of your practice?

There are many aspects of Endodontic practice that I find satisfying. The most rewarding feeling by far is the satisfaction of meeting a patient with significant symptoms



Dr. Andrew Bradley



Partners: Dr. Yuri Shamritsky, Dr. Fiza Singh, and Dr. Peter Morgan

that are life-interrupting and reversing those symptoms quickly and painlessly. Every endodontist experiences this, and I hope they all realize what a unique service it is in the health care world. It is very common in our offices for an emergency patient to be seen very soon after we get the call from his/her dentist. Not long after that, we complete the emergency treatment. At a subsequent appointment, the patient returns with gratitude for having had his/her very significant problem resolved painlessly. Patients benefit greatly from the skill of their endodontist, and the model of how we move patients between offices in response to patient need is a model that should be more frequently found in health care.

Professionally, what are you most proud of?

I am very proud of our practice. While I know that group practice is not for everyone, it

has been a very favorable format for my partners and me. Because we have a group of doctors, we have the opportunity to share ideas and to collaborate on cases. Because we are bigger, we have more staff, and they also bring new ideas and capabilities to the table. The biggest gains in our business management have come about as a result of empowering our staff members to take responsible roles in the practice. We have a great team, and I am very proud of them.



Dr. Andrea Chung Shah



Dr. Paul Talkov



Dr. Morgan and two of his key team members, Cheryl Bennet-Delong and Jennifer Hamlett

The leader of our staff team is our Practice Manager, Michele Whitley. Michele and other staff members have taken an active role in continuing education by presenting courses at the AAE Annual Session and at other CE venues. Holly LeBlanc, another staff member, has served as a consultant to EndoVision. This involvement in the larger world of endodontics outside our practice walls empowers our staff to bring back to our practice innovative ideas they develop in collaboration with colleagues



Dr. Morgan and his team taking a break at the EndoVision booth, from presenting at the AAE Annual Session in San Antonio



Michele Whitley, practice manager and Dr. Peter Morgan, managing partner

at these educational sessions. As AAE Annual Session chair some years ago, I stressed the need to incorporate more staff educational courses in our programs to fulfill this objective.

What is unique about your practice?

I believe our practice is unique. It was started in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1962 by Dr. Harold Levin. At that time he was the only endodontist between Boston and Montreal, Canada. That has changed of course, and now there is competition for almost every endodontist no matter where they practice. What makes us unique is our multi-office format. Because of this, while we do face competition, we stay busy in many locations. The key to business success is having a full appointment book. This is our way of helping that to be true.

What systems do you use?

I have been fortunate to practice in the time of the evolution of technology in endodontics. We all appreciate the teaching and patient education advantage of digital X-ray. However, to really appreciate it, you have to have worked for years with film. As I tell my patients, in the past I would look at the little X-ray films and tell the patients that they needed a root canal. Now I enter the room and the image is already on the big monitor, and the patient often says to me, "I guess I need a root canal."

We started with Schick digital X-ray in 1998. We made a big commitment to equip all of our locations at that time. It was immediately very helpful clinically and

provided a "WOW factor" for patients as they had never seen such a thing before. Our relationship with Schick continues today and has led us to an equally rewarding relationship with Sirona. We followed the integration of digital X-ray with conversion to EndoVision and an Electronic Health Record (EHR). EHR is certainly the current standard for records, and we find it to be essential for a multi-location practice. Because we have multiple doctors, we have loyalties to both Global and Zeiss operating microscopes, and surprisingly we have all become comfortable with both. More recently, we have opened our eyes even wider with the incorporation of the Sirona XG3D CT scan machine. This technology has provided exceptional value to our patients by giving us more information than ever before from which to make treatment decisions. The XG3D by Sirona provides a remarkably clear 5 cm X 5 cm focused field which is truly the current "WOW!" in 3D imaging. The availability of this technology has enhanced our relationship with referring dentists because they repeatedly see the value of the informed treatment decisions we can make in retreatment, surgical, resorption, and unusual anatomy cases.

My partner, Dr. Shamritsky and I recently had the opportunity to attend a Sirona/Sicat opinion leaders conference in Bonn, Germany. I was very impressed with the application of the XG3D CT technology to the creation of surgical guides. This has the potential for application in endodontics as well as in implant placement and the creation of precision prostheses.

Another recent addition to our practice is a marketing tool, the Endofone App. This is essentially an electronic business card that uses smart phone technology to inform our patients about our practice. Accessed via a QR code, patients can instantly learn about us and get all of the essential information about us on their smart phone without having to go to the web site.

These technologies help us, but I believe it is more important than ever for all endodontists to focus on true clinical skills. There is a saying, "It is a poor carpenter who blames his tools." Herb Schilder and many of the great early endodontists did not use a microscope or digital X-ray. Yet they were instrumental in establishing many of the treatment methods we still use today. They showed cases then that would rival any case done today with enhanced vision and rotary instrumentation. I believe the future of endodontics will depend on endodontists defining the value of consistent predictably successful cases for their patients. If endodontics is defined by equipment and technology, it will allow anyone with that equipment and technology to claim the high ground.

What has been your biggest challenge?

I think the most successful practices are those that know how to change to meet the challenge of the changing market for our services. The model used by my partner, Dr. Levin, when he started the practice, may not be the model for success today. The single practitioner then had more patients than the doctor could manage. They were often begging the endo department chairs to send them their next graduate. Today's single practitioners had better

find an area in need of an endodontist, or they will not have a busy schedule. In addition, starting a practice today requires a much larger capital investment than before the days of high-powered software and technology. This increases the risk of a practice venture, and as a result, many endodontists choose to avoid this risk and work in the offices of general dentists, or for corporate dental centers. Naturally, this puts more competitive pressure on the more traditionally situated endodontist. Changing to meet these market realities is challenging. It requires constantly adapting to meet the needs of the referring dentists and their patients. Having younger endodontists in the practice helps us adapt, as they have a closer understanding of the needs and wishes of their peers.

What advice would you give to budding endodontists?

I have had the advantage of working with young endodontists in our practice over the years. They have all taught me more than I have taught them. However, in general, I would advise the young graduate to find a mentor to reach out to when needed. Also, in challenging diagnostic cases, I would advise remembering that you can almost always wait a day to make a treatment decision rather than making a decision immediately that you may regret later.

In talks to endo resident groups, I always stress that success for any endodontist requires you to make yourself indispensable to the practice. By this I mean that it is essential to commit to an “all in” approach. The residents I see who achieve the greatest success begin by working hard in their training and in their practice to continually improve their clinical skills. Then they must also learn to integrate successfully into the group of individuals they work with. This is extremely important as the daily challenge of practice necessitates a team approach to be successful. Also, new doctors in a practice need to recognize the absolute requirement to grow the practice. This means you, the new person, need to become the recognized established person in the practice ASAP. In addition, every doctor in a practice must accept responsibility for special projects. This means recognizing that there is more to

being a successful endodontist than just doing good cases.

What are some tips for maintaining a successful practice?

To help associates succeed, the partners in a practice also need to work hard to give them every opportunity to succeed. In our group, we schedule new doctors in a



Our practice continually strives to incorporate advanced technology, such as the Sirona XG3D Cone-Beam CT machine shown above

way to allow for them to meet patients and referring doctors at a reasonable pace. We do not require that all partners' schedules are filled before associates get patients on their schedule. We invest a lot of time and energy in the process of selecting an associate and integrating him/her into the practice. The new associates make a big commitment also. Our goal is to give this combined effort the best possible chance for success.

What would you have become if you had not become a dentist?

When I was making the final decision to go on to dental school, I briefly considered going to law school. I had minored in Political Science and had some good friends going on to law school. In the end, I decided that dentistry was right for me, and it has turned out to be a very satisfying career.

Tell us some more about yourself. What are your hobbies, and what do you do in your spare time?

When I came to Boston, in addition to finding Boston University and an area to practice, I also met my wife, Jessie Morgan. Jessie is an accomplished painter with a studio near our home. Her abstract works can be seen in contemporary galleries, and on her website. Her paintings are held in

corporate and private collections nationally and internationally. I love that her abstract work is so different from what I do.

I have come to love New England. I am fortunate to live in a New England coastal community with a beautiful natural harbor. I became interested in sailboat racing and have spent many years competing in one-design sailboat racing in this area. I learned that developing a competitive team in sailboat racing has many parallels to developing a successful practice team. Both require dedicated talented individuals who are willing to work hard to achieve success. And in both, others are trying to win too. So, in order to win, you must pay attention to every detail.

I often say to our doctors and staff at the office, “We want our patients to realize that they have been referred to the right place for endodontic care.” To accomplish this, we apply the same rule that I have used with my racing crew to prepare for a sailboat race. Every detail is important and essential to give us the best opportunity for a good outcome. In our offices, this means that we will always strive to have everything from doctor and staff continuing education to incorporating the appropriate technology up to a very high standard. And it means that every contact with patients and every detail about our offices reflect our commitment to the highest standard of care. By putting our patients first, we are in essence putting our referring doctors first as well. It is a simple but powerful philosophy.

We appreciate the trust referring doctors put in our practice every time they refer a patient. Our doctors and staff members work hard to exceed expectations so that the patients return with respect for their dentists for having referred them to us. **EP**

Top favorites

- **Schick:** A real company with great people, a great product, and great support.
- **Sirona:** Another great company with a long history of bringing great products to dentistry.
- **Endovision:** Henry Schein. Leading the way with practice management software for multi-office locations.
- **Brasseler:** Great products for endodontists.
- **Endofone:** An innovative new way to inform referred patients and referring dentists.